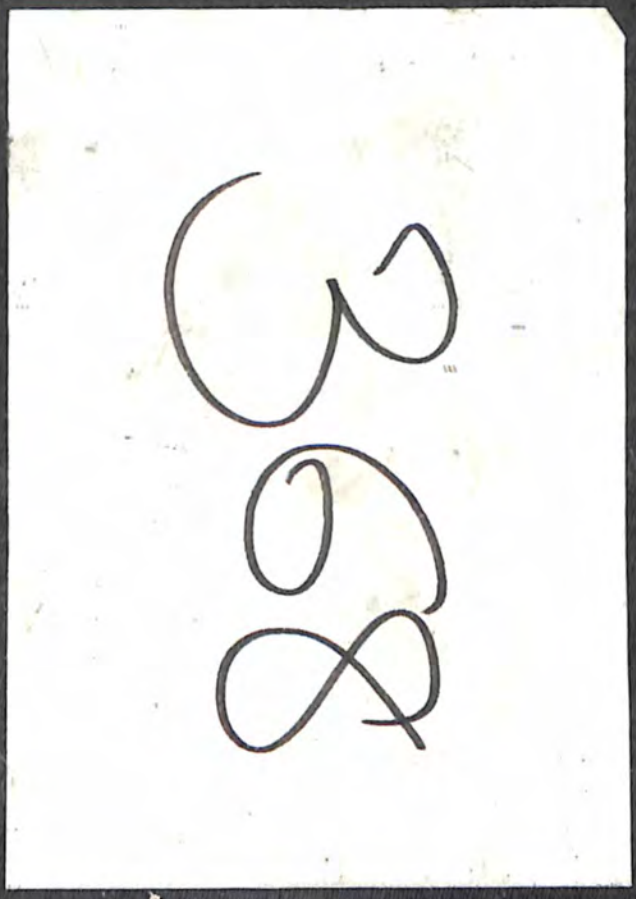
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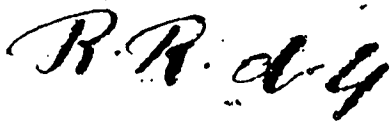

F. Chantry R.A. sculp.t

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George Canning.

Published as the Act directs, 18th Feby 1828, for James Ridgway, No 169 Piccadilly.

THE

SPEECHES

OF THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

GEORGE CANNING.

WITH A

MEMOIR OF HIS LIFE.

BY R. THERRY, ESQ.

OF GRAY'S INN, BARRISTER AT LAW.

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ac

IN SIX VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

"He had ambition to prevail in great things. He had, likewise, honour, which hath three things in it; the vantage ground to do good,—the approach to kings and principal persons,—and the raising of a man's own fortune."

BACON.

LONDON:

JAMES RIDGWAY, 169, PICCADILLY.

MDCCCXXVIII.

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TO THE

RIGHT HON. WILLIAM HUSKISSON, M.P.

Principal Secretary of State for the Colonial Department,

&c. &c.

SIR,

THESE volumes contain the Speeches of MR. CANNING. In the editorial arrangement of them, I originally engaged with the sanction of that lamented Statesman.

Many, indeed most, of the Speeches in this publication, have had the signal and exclusive advantage of the personal revision of MR. CANNING;—and I now, Sir, gladly avail myself of whatever right that advantage may create in me to dedicate them to you.

I know not to whom I can so appropriately inscribe these Speeches, as to one who was united with MR. CANNING in the double bond of private friendship and political attachment,—to one who vindicated his fitness for eminent station by the same honourable qualification of distinguished public talents and great public services,—to one in whom the country beholds the faithful representative of his principles—the chosen associate of his councils.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient humble servant,

R. THERRY.

Gray's-Inn,
January, 1828.

PREFACE.

JUSTICE to the Public, and fairness to myself, demand from me a brief explanation of the circumstances under which I engaged in the publication of these volumes.

To undertake alone and unsanctioned the task of editing the Speeches of the most accomplished orator of his country and age, would subject me to a presumptuous responsibility which I have not incurred, and to which, therefore, I do not wish to be considered liable. It was not without an assurance that my labours should be revised by MR. CANNING, that I was induced to devote myself to the occupation of editing his Speeches.

Between that assurance, and its complete fulfilment, it pleased Providence to interpose, and to withdraw from the glorious orbit in which it moved, the brilliant luminary that for a time shone upon my path, and "directed me in the way that I should go."

It only remained for me to select from the best sources which my industry and diligence could command, the most approved and authentic records of his eloquence; and to incorporate them with the far larger portion of the work which MR. CANNING had personally revised.

As to the Memoir which is prefixed to the first volume, my object has simply been, as it is elsewhere stated in this work, "to connect in a brief narrative the leading events of the political career of MR. CANNING—to mark the periods of his progressive advancement in public life—and to collect such facts and circumstances as may render this publication a faithful record of the principles of that illustrious Statesman, and of the eloquence with which those principles were enforced."

FAC-SIMILE REPRESENTATION

OF AUTOGRAPH CORRECTIONS MADE BY MR. CANNING, ON TWO IMPORTANT PASSAGES IN THE PROOFS OF HIS SPEECHES ON THE KING'S MESSAGE, RELATIVE TO THE AFFAIRS OF PORTUGAL.

I fear that the next war which shall be kindled in Europe, ~~even though confined within the narrow limits of Spain and Portugal~~ will be a war not ~~merely~~ of armies, ~~but~~ of opinions, ~~I dread that it~~ will be that war this Country shall be compelled to enter, ~~although we should~~ shall enter into it, ~~(as I trust we should do,)~~ with a sincere and anxious desire to mitigate rather than exasperate, —and to mingle only in the ~~war~~ of arms, not in the more fatal ~~war~~ of opinions; ~~but~~ I know that this Country, (however earnestly she ~~might desire~~ to avoid it,) could not, in such case, avoid seeing ranked under her banners all the restless and dissatisfied, ~~whether with or without cause~~ of any nation with which she might come in conflict. It is the contemplation of this new power in ~~any future~~ war, which excites my anxious apprehension. It is one thing to have a giant's strength; but it would be another to use it like a giant. The consciousness of strength is security; but in the situation in which this country stands, our business is not to seek opportunities of displaying it, but to ~~endeavour to make~~ the professors of violent and exaggerated ~~opinions~~ on both sides feel, that it is not their interest to convert an umpire into an adversary.

But again, Sir, is the Spain of the present day the Spain of which ~~our ancestors~~ were afraid? Is it the nation whose puissance was to ~~have~~ shaken us from ~~our~~ sphere? No, Sir, it was another Spain—it was the Spain, within the limits of whose empire the sun never set—it was Spain with the Indies, that excited the jealousies and alarmed the imaginations of ~~the statesmen of those days.~~ I have already said, that when the French army entered Spain, we might, if we chose, have ~~resisted~~ that measure by war.

But then, Sir, the balance of power! The entry of the French army into Spain disturbed that balance, and we ought to have gone to war to restore it! But were there no other means than war for restoring the balance of power? Is the balance of power a fixed and unalterable standard? Or is it not a standard perpetually varying, as civilization advances, and as new nations spring up, and take their ~~station among the powers of the world~~? The balance of power a century and a half ago was to be adjusted between France and Spain, the Netherlands, and England, ~~and~~ Austria. Some years afterwards, Russia assumed her ~~place~~ in European politics. Some years after that again, Prussia became not only a substantive, but a preponderating ~~power~~.

PRINTED AT ROSS's TYPOLITHOGRAPHIC PRESS,

No. 4, Howard Street, Strand.

~~[illegible]~~

° The Statesmen of the times of William & of Anne

expected ² England /³ her/

+ our ancestors

⊕ resisted or resented

place among the established political communities.

FAC SIMILE

OF A NOTE FROM MR. CANNING TO MR. HUSKISSON.

Fo Decr. 30 1825

My Dear Huskisson

I transmit to you a Letter from Mr Pattison (the E I Director) upon the Silk Trade — which is temperately though earnestly written; & which moreover he desires me to show to you.

Ever sincerely yours

G C

SPEECHES,

&c. &c.

MEMOIR,

&c. &c.

"He had ambition to prevail in great things. He had, likewise, honour, which hath three things in it; the vantage ground to do good; the approach to kings and principal persons; and the raising of a man's own fortune. He that hath the best of these intentions, when he aspireth, is an honest man; and that Prince, that can discern of these intentions in another that aspireth, is a wise Prince."—LORD BACON'S ESSAYS.

London, January, 1828.

SIX or seven months have rolled by, since the mortal remains of Mr. Canning were conveyed to the national cemetery of the great statesmen of England, with whom they are now gathered in the peace and shelter of the grave. And who, amongst us, but feels the calamity that in his death has befallen the empire, as though it were an event of yesterday? The burst of universal sorrow is not yet spent—the tribute of admiration and applause still pours into England in every language, and from every clime, in which civil liberty is regarded as an advantage, and independence a blessing, to nations. The councils of Mr. Canning still influence the destinies of empires. His principles continue (and long may they so continue) the theme of admiration and gratitude to the British people—the load-star of policy for the guidance of British statesmen—the source of consolation, of freedom, and happiness to mankind.

France, yet young in her regenerated monarchy, needs repose to consolidate her new institutions, and cultivate the arts of industry and peace, after the torment of a sanguinary revolution, and the fatigue of a military usurpation for more than thirty years. In promoting this object, not more politic and wise for France than beneficial to her neighbours, and especially to England, France and Europe have lost a main stay, in being deprived of the influential genius of Mr. Canning. America, and the great northern powers of Europe, "respected and feared him more than any Minister who ever presided over the foreign policy of England."* Turning to those countries which are subjected to a less happy and more unsettled sway—the outraged and unemancipated slave of Africa and the West Indies—the degraded and insulted Catholic of Ireland—the trampled-down Christian of Greece—the loyal and faithful adherent of constitutional legitimacy in Spain and Portugal—the citizen of South America still struggling in the incompleted vindication of his freedom—mingle their united expression of deep and unaffected woe at the calamity that has fallen equally upon them, as upon us;—and feel as though their just hopes—their objects—and interests, were left orphans in the world. And lastly, and most deeply, England has to deplore the loss of a patriot minister, who was intently engaged in imparting renewed and augmented energies to her resources, by enlightened measures of commercial policy and financial economy.

The present moment then, whilst his fame is filling the world, as though he "still moved, acted, and had his being amongst us," is not a well-timed and seasonable one, to enter into a cold and deliberate narrative of all the scenes in which he moved, and in which he acted a more or less prominent part. A sufficient interval has not elapsed between the blow that has been struck, and the contemplation of its effect, to make the life of Mr. Canning a suitable subject, at present,

* An expression attributed to the Marquis of Lansdowne.

for the province of biography. It may not be unacceptable, however, to the readers of his Speeches, that the editor of them should connect, in a brief narrative, the leading events of his political career—marking the periods of his progressive advancement in public life—and collecting such facts and circumstances, as may render the present publication a faithful record of the principles of that illustrious statesman, and of the eloquence with which those principles were illustrated and enforced.

The political positions, which Mr. Canning occupied, present the consideration of three distinct eras. The first commences from his entrance into Parliament, in 1793, and extends to the death of his friend, Mr. Pitt, in 1806. The second comprehends the long interval between the death of Mr. Pitt, and that of the Marquis of Londonderry, in 1822. The third era—the most glorious for the fame of Mr. Canning—the happiest for the destinies of his country—embraces the period which takes its date from his accession to office, as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in 1822, and terminates with the simultaneous close of his political and mortal career, in 1827. These eras, each of them important, invite a separate consideration. There is, it is true, a fourth, from the birth of Mr. Canning to his entrance into public life;—but the portion of the lives of illustrious men, which embraces the season of their pupilage, and of their qualification for future eminent stations, is so merged in the brilliancy of those periods, in which their subsequent services are performed, that, in reference to them, it sinks into comparative unimportance. Some notice of it, however, especially as the early career of Mr. Canning was a distinguished one, even in an unpresuming sketch of this kind, may not with propriety be altogether omitted.

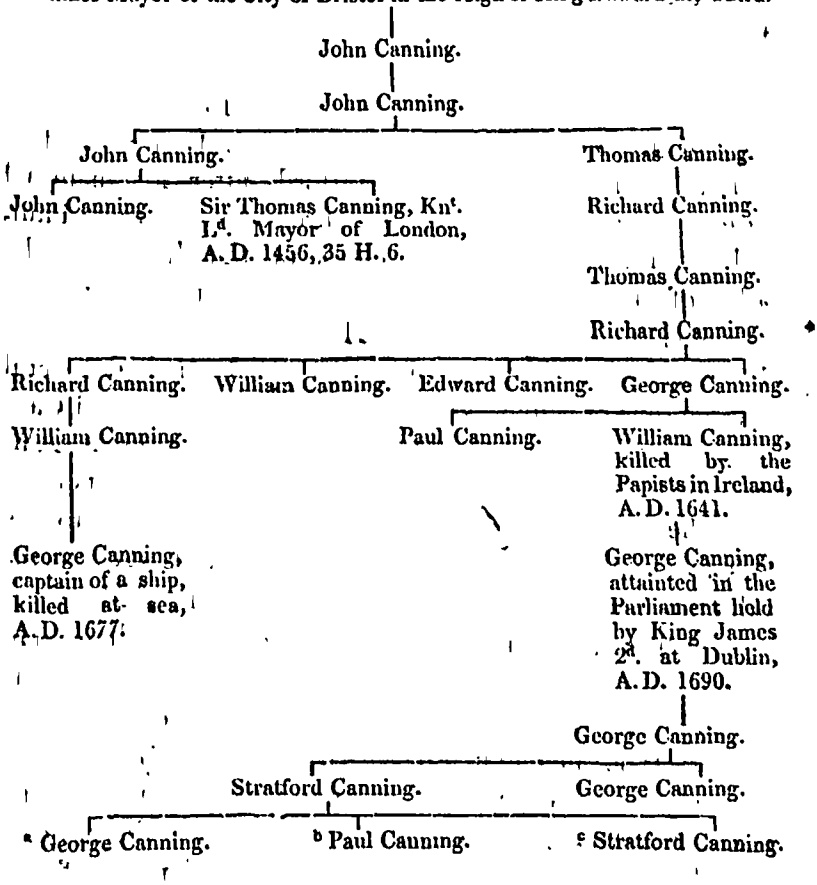
George Canning, the late Prime Minister of England, was born in London, on the 11th of April, 1770. He was descended of a respectable and ancient family. For three centuries, and upwards, the Cannings of Foxcote have been among the most respected members of

the resident gentry of Warwickshire. In 1618, George, the fourth son of Richard Canning, of Foxcote, obtained a grant of the Manor of Garvagh, in London-Derry, from James I. This royal bequest induced him to come over to Ireland, and settle there. His grandson, of the same name, who married a daughter of Robert Stratford, Esq. of Baltinglass (an aunt of the first Earl of Aldborough), had a son named Stratford, after his maternal parent. Stratford Canning had three sons, George, Paul, and Stratford. George, the eldest of the three, was the father of the late minister;—Paul, the second, had one son, promoted to the peerage in 1818, by the title of Baron Garvagh;—Stratford Canning, the third son, had several children, one of whom, the Right Honourable Stratford Canning, is a distinguished diplomatist, and the present Ambassador from this country at the Court of Constantinople.

As the pedigree of Mr. Canning has been supplied to this work from an authentic source, it is introduced here; its introduction may not serve to augment the fame of Mr. Canning, for he was the most illustrious member of his line. He was one of those mighty master spirits which "peep out once an age;"—his name may shed lustre and honour on his posterity, "but he had in himself a salient spring of generous and manly action, which needed not to resort to any stagnant wasting reservoir of merit in any ancestry." To those, however, who may be disposed to stickle for the point of the respectability of his descent, the subjoined pedigree will suffice to show, that his family belonged to an independent and honourable rank of life.

WILLIAM CANNING,

Six times Mayor of the City of Bristol in the reign of King Edward the Third.



[a] Father of the late Minister.
[b] Father of the present Lord Garvagh.
[c] Father of the present Ambassador to Constantinople.

George Canning, the father of the statesman, was a gentleman of considerable literary acquirements. He displeased his parents by marrying a dowerless beauty; this alliance was formed in London after he had entered his name as a student of the Middle Temple. The maiden name of Mrs. Canning, whom he married in the spring of 1768, was Miss Costello, an Irish lady, who, though unendowed with for-

tune, belonged to a family of high respectability. By the surviving members of Mr. Canning's family who remember this lady, at the time of her marriage, she is spoken of in terms of high commendation, as a lady of great beauty and accomplishments.

The indiscretion of yielding to the promptings of "the cruel tyrant love,"* without a parental sanction, was severely punished by his father, who, in consequence of it, disinherited him of the property of which, in the course of nature, he would have become the rightful possessor. An allowance of £150 a-year was settled upon him, and he was given at the same time to understand that, in the event of his father dying before him, this scanty provision would not be increased. He was called to the bar, but it seems that he never pursued that profession with earnestness. His taste and talents rather inclined him to poetry and the pursuit of polite literature, than to the austerer study of the law. His residence in London was a perpetual struggle against adverse circumstances, but, although "the hard hand of a vexatious need sometimes oppressed them," Mr. and Mrs. Canning were received into a very elegant circle of society, and lived together contented, happy, and respected. He died in April, 1771, whilst he was engaged in making fresh efforts to extricate himself from difficulties which daily thickened around him.

Thus the circumstances of the birth of Mr. Canning—the subject of this Memoir—were far from auspicious of a future

* Love certainly was one cause of the unhappy disagreement between the father and grandfather of the statesman, but not the love of Miss Costello, whom he married in the spring of 1768—whereas his first attachment was at its height in 1757—when he came to the Temple—he never returned to his own country, nor ever saw any of his family afterwards, except his two brothers and eldest sister. His alliance with Miss Costello, as may be supposed, served rather to widen, than to diminish, the breach between the father and son.

distinguished destiny. In the first year of his infancy his father died;—his mother, by her husband's death, was left an unprovided widow—and was obliged to devote those talents and accomplishments which hitherto adorned her in private life, to procure an honourable and independent subsistence in public. To a lady of her beauty and abilities, the stage presented itself as an obvious mode of accomplishing this object;—her success in this profession was not eminent; it was sufficient, however, to gratify her laudable desire of arriving at independence. She married a second time, Mr. Hunn, but soon became a widow a second time.

It is, perhaps, opportune here to state that Mr. Canning took the earliest occasion of relieving his mother from the necessity of obtaining a maintenance by the public exercise of her talents. With an affection, truly duteous and exemplary, he not only applied a portion of the means allowed him by his family, for the prosecution of his collegiate studies, to her support, but devoted to that praiseworthy purpose the first fruits of his public services. When he retired, in 1801, from the office of Under Secretary of State, he was entitled to a pension of 500*l.* a-year; instead of appropriating that sum to his own uses, he requested to have it settled as a provision on his mother. His attention to his mother throughout his whole life was most kind and affectionate, and will be contemplated with delight by those who love to appreciate the private qualities which endear, in preference to the more glittering, though not more substantial or admirable ones, which dazzle and astonish. Mr. Canning not only paid a yearly visit to his mother at Bath, where she resided, but made it a rule, which he invariably observed, to write to her every Sunday. So strictly did he observe this rule of addressing a weekly letter to his mother, that, during his embassy at the Court of Lisbon, even when opportunities of intercourse between Portugal and England did not occur sometimes for several weeks together, he nevertheless wrote his Sunday letter, so that a packet often conveyed four

or five letters together to his mother. These letters his grateful parent preserved; and she delighted in reading them in the circle of her friends at Bath.

The early education of Mr. Canning was superintended by his guardian and uncle, Mr. Stratford Canning, an eminent London merchant, who died a short time before Mr. Canning went to the University. His scholastic and collegiate expenses, however, were defrayed from a small estate in Ireland, bequeathed to him by his grandfather, who, at the urgent request of his grandmother, was induced to make a settlement upon him, which, although insufficient as a provision for life, was ample as a fund for education. His first academic instruction was received at Hyde Abbey, Winchester, under the care of the Rev. Mr. Richards, and Mr. Canning considered himself greatly indebted to this Rev. Gentleman for having abundantly and judiciously stored his mind with the rudiments of learning, and thus contributed to his subsequent acquirements and fame as a most accomplished scholar. The advantages which he derived from a well-methodized system of early instruction, induced him ever afterwards to attach the utmost importance to the initiatory part of the education of youth. From Hyde Abbey Mr. Canning was sent to Eton, between twelve and thirteen years of age, and placed in the remove at once as an oppidan; there he soon became distinguished for the elegance of his Latin and English poetry, as well as for the easy flow and propriety of diction which distinguished his prose compositions. His contemporaries at Eton, describe him as a boy possessed of great quickness of parts in apprehending whatever he undertook to learn—of a frank, generous, and conciliatory disposition—and of a bold, manly, and unflinching spirit, qualities admirably calculated to render him popular in a public school. Although Mr. Canning evinced, over the companions of his boyhood, a quick intelligence, there was nothing precocious in the ascendancy which he maintained amongst them. In his talent there was nothing fallacious,

or forced, or disappointing. He possessed great natural capabilities, and these he improved by the most sedulous and successful cultivation. He laboured hard "*sudavit et alsit*," sensible that, with talents such as he possessed, nothing was to be denied to labour—he left

> ——————to the fribble and the fool,
> To scorn the seasoning of the school.

His studious assiduity was rather increased and stimulated than diminished, by the consciousness of his power, and the success which crowned him was not more the triumph of genius than it was the patient result of persevering industry. The lead which he took when a boy, he maintained throughout the intellectual emulations of youth, and through the sterner struggles of ambitious and unyielding manhood. Such was the successful diligence with which Mr. Canning prosecuted his studies at Eton, that, at fifteen years of age, he was one of the most distinguished scholars there, and joined with others of his school-fellows in producing a literary work, of high classical repute, entitled the MICROCOSM. The publication of this work commenced in 1786. Its appearance forms an interesting epoch in the history of Eton. It introduced an improved taste for classical composition;—it marshalled the rising talents of the members of that celebrated seminary into emulative excellence, and kept alive the spirit of a generous rivalry, which led to the formation of permanent and worthy friendships. Of this work Mr. Canning was the avowed editor, as well as the ablest and most popular supporter. The essays which he contributed to it were signed "B." They evince a remarkable facility and happiness of expression, and are written in a vein of sprightly and well-tempered satire. The following essay may be acceptable to those who happen not to have met with this very interesting little work. It is illustrative not only of the tone and temper of the publication, but of Mr. Canning's powers of analogy—powers, it is true, here

disporting themselves on trifles, but which he afterwards brought into action, with surpassing force and effect, in serious discussion on subjects of national interest.*

* ANALOGY BETWEEN WEAVING AND POETRY.

To the Editor of the Microcosm.

Monday, April 9, 1787.

"Tantum de medio sumptis accedit honoris."—HOR.
Such honour common subjects may receive.

"SIR,

"IT must no doubt often have occurred to a writer of your penetration, that there is nothing more unjust and illiberal, than those of ill-grounded prejudices, which confound in general censure, or undistinguishing contempt, any particular class or description of men. And yet these prejudices, however sensible we cannot but be of their improper tendency, we are all too apt to indulge; till, nourished by long habit, they take as deep a root in our minds as if they had been implanted there by nature; and acquire such strength, as enable them to withstand the most forcible arguments, to resist the most probable conviction.

"There are in Turkey a body of men, against whom universal contempt is indiscriminately, as well as undeservedly directed; and these are the Worshipful Company of Grocers. Insomuch, that should any member of a noble family have disgraced himself and his connexions, by living a life of tranquillity, or, what is worse, dying in his bed, that is, a natural death, his name is never pronounced by his relations but with disapprobation and disgust; and his memory is consigned to infamy, for having, as they say, lived and died like a Raccal, or grocer.

"The person who now has the honour to address you, is a member of a community, who, by the courtesy of England, are like the Raccals of Turkey, collectively involved in the most indiscriminate ridicule, the most comprehensive contempt; I say collectively, Sir, because, individually we are allowed to have no existence; the wicked waggery of the world, judging nine weavers and nine tailors requisite to the formation of a man. Yes, Sir, to so high a pitch have they carried the disrespect in which these professions are held, that, in the eyes of 'the many,' as the poet calls them, to address a man by the appellation either of a weaver or tailor, implies not only, as

Mr. Canning was proudly sensible of the benefit which the *Microcosm* conferred upon the seminary where he had

formerly, a reflection on his horsemanship, but on his personal courage, and even his personal existence.

"I, Sir, am a weaver. I feel for the injured dignity of my profession; and since, thanks to my own genius, and two years and a half of education at an academy on Tower Hill, I have a very decent acquaintance with the Classics; that is, I know them all by name, and can tell Greek when I see it, any day in the week; and since, as far as Shakspeare's plays, and the Monthly Magazine go, I have a very pretty share of English book-learning; from these considerations, MR. GRIFFIN, I think myself qualified to contend, not for the utility and respectability only, but for the honour of the art of weaving. Tailoring, as it is secondary to weaving, will, of course, partake of the fruits of my labours: as, in asserting the dignity of the one, I maintain the credit of the other.

"To this end, MR. GRIFFIN, I shall not appeal to the candour of my readers, but shall provoke their judgment; I shall not solicit their indulgence, but by the force of demonstration will claim their assent, to my opinion.

"Poetry, Sir, is universally allowed to be the first and noblest of the arts and sciences; insomuch, that it is the opinion of critics, that an epic poem is the greatest work the human mind is capable of bringing to perfection. If, then, I can prove, that the art of weaving is in any degree analogous to the art of poetry; if this analogy has been allowed by the whole tribe of critics! so far, that in speaking of the latter, they have used the terms of the former, and have passed judgment on the works of the poet in the language of the manufacturer; nay, if poetry herself, has condescended to imitate the expressions, and to adopt the technical terms into her own vocabulary; then may I surely hope, that the sanction of criticism may challenge the respect, and the flattery of poetry (for imitation is the highest degree of flattery) may claim the admiration of mankind.

"First then with regard to criticism; to select a few examples from a multitude of others, are we not entertained with the works of Longinus and the Gentleman's Magazine, with delectable dissertations on the weaving of plots, and the interweaving of episodes? Are we not continually informed, that the author unravels the web of his intrigue, or breaks the thread of his narration? Besides these, a friend of mine, a great etymologist, has assured me, that bombast and bombasin originally sprung from the same root; and fustian,

imbibed his early instruction. In reference to Eton, and to this clever periodical which his talents were mainly instru-

every body knows, is a term applied indifferently to passages in poetry, or materials for a pair of breeches. So similar is considered the skill employed in the texture of the epic poem and a piece of broad cloth; so parallel the qualifications requisite to throw the shuttle and guide the pen.

"I was not a little pleased the other day to find, in the critique of one of the most eminent writers of the present day, the works of a favourite poet styled a tissue. An idea then occurred to me, suggested, perhaps, by my partiality for my profession, which I am not without some faint hope of one day seeing accomplished.

"By a little labour and ingenuity, it might surely be discovered, that the works of different authors bear a considerable affinity (like this of the tissue) to the different productions of the loom. Thus, to enumerate a few instances, without any regard to chronological order, might not the flowery smoothness of Pope be aptly enough compared to flowered satin? Might not the compositions of all the poets laureate, ancient and modern, very properly be termed princes' stuff? And who would dispute the title of Homer, to everlasting? For Shakspeare, indeed, I am at a loss for a comparison, unless I should liken him to those shot silks, which vary the brightness of their hues into a multitude of different lights and shades. And would orthography allow of the pun, I might say, that there are few poets but would be proud to be thought worthy of the green bays.

"For proof of the use which poetry makes of the weaver's dictionary, *vide* ten thousand odes on spring; where you may catch the fragrance of the damask rose; listen to the rustling of the silken foliage; or lie extended, with a listless langour, pillowing your head upon the velvet mead; to say nothing of nature's loom, which is set to work regularly on the first of May, to weave variegated carpets for the lawns and landscapes. Now, MR. GRIFFIN, these similitudes, though very pretty and very *apropos*, I own I am not perfectly satisfied with. The Genoese certainly excel us in the article of velvets; and the French silks are by many people far preferred for elegance to any of English manufacture. I appeal then to you, MR. GRIFFIN, if these allusions would not be much more delightful to British ears, if they tended to promote such manufactures as are more peculiarly our own. The Georgics of Virgil, let me tell you, Sir, have been suspected by some people, to have been written with a political, as well as poetical view; for the purpose of converting the victorious spirits of the Roman soldiery from the

mental in establishing there, he writes thus, at the close of the last essay which he contributed to it. "From her (Eton)

love of war, and the severity of military hardships to the milder occupations of peace, and the more profitable employments of agriculture. Surely, equally successful would be the endeavours of our poets if they would boldly extirpate from their writings every species of foreign manufacture; and adopt, in their stead, materials from the prolific looms of their countrymen. Surely, we have a variety which would suit all subjects and all descriptions;—nor do I despair, if this letter has the desired effect, but I shall presently see landscapes beautifully diversified with (all due deference being paid to alliteration) plains of plush, pastures of poplin, downs of dimity, vallies of velveret, and meadows of Manchester. How gloriously novel would this be; how patriotically poetical an innovation; which nothing but bigoted prejudice could object to, nothing but dissaffection to the interests of the country could disapprove.

"Excuse me, Sir, if I have detained you beyond the usual limits of a letter, on a subject, in which I am so deeply interested. Pardon, Sir, the partiality of an old man, to the profession of his youth; and, O! MR. GRIFFIN, may your paper be the means of restoring from unmerited ridicule, and an illiberal contempt, an art, which has added a clearness and a polish to the remarks of criticism; and has clothed the conceptions of poetry in the language of metaphor: an art, inferior to none, but those which have so frequently and so successfully borrowed its assistance; nor even to them, unless it can be proved, that that which provides the necessary raiment for the body, should yield to those which are but the sources of amusement to the mind. I am, Sir, yours, &c. "H. HOMESPUN."

"I CANNOT but own myself much pleased with the enthusiasm which seems to animate my correspondent, while he treats on a subject so near his heart. He has, I can assure him, my full approbation to his proposed improvements; and I am convinced every well-meaning person in His Majesty's kingdoms must feel the force of his reasoning. Will any caviller presume to contend, that our looms are not as fertile of poetical imagery, as those of our neighbours? Have we not handkerchiefs of printed cotton, crowded with all the beauties of rural scenery? and 'azure flowers that blow,' in the carpets of the Wilton manufactory? Nay, even supposing an unquestionable inferiority on the side of the English looms, would not every Englishman still show a laudable partiality to his country?

to have sucked the 'milk of science,' to have contracted for her a pious fondness and veneration, which will bind me for ever to her interests; and perhaps to have improved by my earnest endeavours her younger part of the present generation, is to me a source of infinite pride and satisfaction."

Mr. Canning, in 1788—his eighteenth year—left Eton, and was entered at Christ Church College, Oxford. The celebrity of his talents had preceded him to the University. There he fully sustained, and even enhanced, his high literary reputation. Continued habits of persevering industry imparted solidity to the elegance of his attainments: he won several prizes, the pure Latinity of which received high and merited commendation from the heads of the University. A more important feature, however, than even the fame of his literary honours, distinguished Mr. Canning's career at the University. This was the formation of some intimacies with eminent and estimable men, which endured as long as he lived. Of these, as far as relates to his future destiny, as a public man, perhaps the most important, was the intimacy which he formed with the present Earl of Liverpool. The friendship which subsisted between these eminent men, commenced on terms of perfect equality

and by such a preference, what he lost in poetry, would he not amply make up in patriotism?

"In short, so convinced am I by MR. HOMESPUN'S arguments, that I cannot help taking the earliest opportunity to recommend to such of my correspondents, as may have been induced by the forwardness of the season, to begin 'Odes on Spring' for the use of the MICROCOSM, that they would be careful to stick to the productions of the English loom, if they think it necessary to draw metaphors from weaving at all; that is, if they do really think, that nature can be embellished by the technical terms of art; and that the works of the Creator can receive additional beauty by being assimilated to those of the manufacturer: which, in my humble opinion, I will confess, does not appear to be the case.

"I know no better advice that I can give to my correspondents on this head, unless, indeed, it were not to write 'Odes on Spring' at all.

"B."

and independence. It was formed when both were too young for politics;—it was the result of an association natural and likely to occur between aspiring persons of an equal age, addicted to studious and well-regulated habits, and animated by a creditable aspiration after honourable distinction. In its progress, and during its continuance, nothing of unbecoming compromise was asked or conceded on either side. Lord Seaford and Mr. Sturges Bourne were among those with whom he contracted a friendship at Christ Church, which lasted with unvarying fidelity through all the vicissitudes of his public life.

Whilst upon the subject of the early intimacies of Mr. Canning, it is but befitting to state, that the offer of the Foreign Department to Mr. Canning, on Lord Londonderry's death, was not solely to be attributed to the "friendship" of Lord Liverpool. Whatever influence may have been employed by Lord Liverpool on that occasion arose from his conviction of the "necessity," on public grounds, and not merely from "feelings of private friendship." Indeed, the public voice, with one accord, designated him for the office at that time. Lest the above description of Mr. Canning's early intimacy with Lord Liverpool should convey an erroneous impression, it should be added, that though an early and intimate friend of Mr. Canning, Lord Liverpool was not one of his *most* intimate friends, and their intimacy was on more than one occasion interrupted by the difference of their political opinions; this interruption of it lasted during the whole of Mr. Addington's administration—when Lord Liverpool was Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs—to which Mr. Canning was strenuously opposed. Again it was interrupted during Mr. Percival's administration—and, after his death, during that of Lord Liverpool, till 1814, when Mr. Canning accepted the embassy to Lisbon. Besides his intimacy with Lord Seaford and Mr. Sturges Bourne, there were other persons:—for instance, Lord Granville and Lord Morley, with whom Mr. Canning formed friendships at

Christ Church, and which continued equally uninterrupted by any political differences. There were others, whose friendship survived the difference in their political opinions, as Lord Holland and Lord Carlisle—others, again, with whom Mr. Canning formed earlier friendships at Eton, and which equally subsisted through his life, as Mr. Frere, and Mr. Smith, late Member of Parliament for Lincoln, and a writer in the *Microcosm*, and Mr. George Ellis. To these may be added the names of other eminent men, were it not that the detail would embrace an enumeration beyond the intended scope and limit of this essay.

Mr. Canning, on obtaining a bachelor's degree, entered himself a student of Lincoln's Inn. Although he became a member of the Society of Lincoln's Inn, and took chambers there, yet it does not appear that he ever pursued the study of the law with any serious intention of adopting the legal profession as a provision for life. He studied it rather with a view of understanding the principles of the constitution, than of cultivating the practice of the courts. The quips and quiddities of legal forms were foreign to his taste and habits. The tone and bent of his genius did not prompt him to a very earnest study of the works of those erudite persons, *Peelius Corvinus atque Poplicola qui excidanêre causàs Latinè*, whose precepts and whose precedents the black-letter men and special pleaders of the inns of court hold in far higher estimation than they do the spirit of Chatham, or the wisdom of Burke, or the philosophy of Bacon. In all the discussions upon legal subjects in Parliament, in which Mr. Canning took a part, he prefaced his observations by expressing a wish, that he might merely be understood as an "unlearned member," and as offering the observations which a common sense consideration of the subject suggested. It was about this period, whilst Mr. Canning was a student of Lincoln's Inn, that his acquaintance with Mr. Sheridan, who had previously noticed him as a promising schoolboy, ripened into intimacy; but it was to his uncle, Mr. S. Canning, he was

indebted for his introduction to Messrs. Fox, Burke, General Fitzpatrick, and the leading Whigs of the day. Mr. Fox was particularly consulted about placing him at Eton. It is not true, as has been alleged, that Mr. Sheridan was, in any, even the most remote degree of kindred, related to him:—neither is it true, as has been alleged also, that Sheridan contributed any part of the expenses of Mr. Canning's education; and, indeed, the only record that there is of any pecuniary obligation between them, is the fact mentioned by Mr. Moore, in his Life of Sheridan, that Mr. Sheridan one evening, shortly before his death, addressed a note to Mr. Canning, in the House of Commons, requesting the loan of 100*l.*, with which request Mr. Canning instantly complied.

The consideration of Mr. Canning's character, as a public man, commences almost immediately on the completion of his academic course. Whilst he was studying for the bar, he had augmented, at several private societies, the distinguished reputation as a speaker which he had previously obtained at Oxford.

The commencement of his acquaintance with Mr. Pitt, though somewhat curious in its circumstances, is attributable to the same honourable source from which he derived all his distinction in after life—his own talents. The celebrity of those talents reached the minister. Mr. Pitt, through a private channel, communicated his desire to see Mr. Canning. With this requisition Mr. Canning, of course, readily complied. Mr. Pitt proceeded immediately on their meeting to declare to Mr. Canning the object of his requesting an interview with him;—which was to state, that he had heard of Mr. Canning's reputation as a scholar and a speaker, and that, if he concurred in the policy which Government was then pursuing, arrangements would be made to facilitate his introduction into Parliament. After a full explanation between Mr. Pitt and Mr. Canning, of the feelings of each on all the important public questions of the moment, the result was, on Mr. Canning's

part, the determination to connect himself politically with Mr. Pitt; and on the part of Mr. Pitt, the offer of a seat in Parliament. He may have confided this determination to Mr. Sheridan, or possibly may have consulted him; but even the assertion, so frequently made, that Sheridan's advice mainly influenced him in this important step, is sustained by no competent authority. This acquiescence in the proposal of Mr. Pitt, Mr. Canning's friends knew to be consistent with his previously avowed and conscientious conviction, as when he had no motives of interest to sway him in adopting that conviction, and very strong ones to dissuade him from it, he had uncompromisingly expressed it in the Whig circle in which he principally moved, and by which, in the ordinary course of events, it was natural he should have expected to be introduced into Parliament.

'It is alike important for the truth of history, and due in justice to the fame of Mr. Canning, to state, that his opinions respecting the French Revolution were formed, and his principles determined, long before a prospect presented itself of his becoming acquainted with Mr. Pitt. It is true that his early associates were, for the most part, persons of Whig principles;—his uncle, who superintended his education, was an avowed Whig;—and his own writings and speeches at the University, breathe warm sentiments in favour of those liberal principles with which the name of that important political party in the state has been identified. The French Revolution, however, was a prodigious event in the history of the world, and was not to be dealt with according to any settled principles, by which Whigs and Tories had hitherto been discriminated in this country. By the leaders of both parties, at its commencement, it was approved; for it is an historical truth, that favourable sentiments towards the French Revolution were at first expressed, not only by Mr. Fox (whose generous nature expanded into a love of freedom in every clime, and prompted him to hail, with enthusiastic ardour, the first efforts of a mighty people,

rising in the just assertion of their invaded liberties), but by Mr. Pitt, whom few persons will suspect of a too sanguine temperament, or of any dangerous ebullition of feeling in favour of freedom—he too hailed the French Revolution in its origin;—and declared his conviction, "that the present convulsions in France must, sooner or later, terminate in general harmony and regular order. Whenever the situation of France should become restored, it would prove freedom rightly understood—freedom resulting from good order and good government; and, thus circumstanced, France would stand forward as one of the most brilliant powers in Europe; she would enjoy that just kind of liberty which he venerated, and the invaluable existence of which it was his duty, as an Englishman, particularly to cherish."

In the general exultation which the French Revolution, at its first burst, awakened, even among the temperate advocates of well regulated freedom, throughout Europe, Mr. Canning, with a mind fresh from the contemplation of those heroic achievements in the cause of freedom, which "raised up the Greek and Roman name with such a lustre," sanguinely participated. This admiration, however, was limited to the principle of the necessity of adjusting the inequalities of the political condition of France—of correcting its abuses—and of remodelling and invigorating the institutions which a long series of acts of misgovernment had enfeebled. Mr. Canning's opinions respecting the French Revolution, however, had undergone a change previous to his acquaintance with Mr. Pitt, and it was *that* change which led to his connexion with Mr. Pitt, and to his determination not to connect himself politically with the Whig party. This determination was strengthened by the course which Mr. Fox and others of the Whigs took about this time, and which produced the separation between Mr. Fox and Mr. Grey, on the one side, and Mr. Burke and Mr. Windham, on the other; and perhaps the most intelligible and most correct explanation of Mr. Canning's determination not to connect himself with the Whig party, but to attach

himself to Mr. Pitt, is to state, that his decision was formed upon the same grounds which induced the Duke of Portland, Lord Spencer, Mr. Windham, Mr. Grenville, and those who acted with them, to separate from Mr. Fox, and take office under Mr. Pitt, and at the same period of time; though independently of them, and without any concert.

"It is questionable," says Mr. Moore, in his Life of Sheridan, "whether, in thus resolving to join the ascendant side, Mr. Canning has not conferred a greater benefit on the country, than he ever would have been able to effect in the ranks of his original friends. That party, which has now so long been the sole depositary of the power of the state, had, in addition to the original narrowness of its principles, contracted all that proud obstinacy in antiquated error, which is the invariable characteristic of such monopolies; and which, however consonant with its vocation, as the chosen instrument of the Crown, should have long since *invalided* it in the service of a free and enlightened people. Some infusion of the spirit of the times into this body had become necessary even for its preservation, in the same manner as the inhalement of youthful breath has been recommended by some physicians to the infirm and superannuated. This renovating inspiration the genius of Mr. Canning has supplied. His first political lessons were derived from sources too sacred to his young admiration to be forgotten. He has carried the spirit of these lessons with him into the councils which he joined, and, by the vigour of the graft, which already, indeed, shows itself in the fruits, bids fair to change altogether the nature of toryism."

Thus Mr. Canning entered into public life, the avowed pupil of Mr. Pitt. He was returned to Parliament, in 1793, for the borough of Newport, in the Isle of Wight. There have been few persons, on whom was imposed, in an equal degree, the difficulty—or who were so keenly sensitive of it as Mr. Canning—of proving himself equal to the fame for eloquence, which had preceded him to the House of Commons before he became a member of it. Throughout the first session that he sat in Parliament, his attention was

active and vigilant—his attendance constant;—but although alluring opportunities for oratorical display were not wanting, he preserved strict silence. He seems to have devoted this first session, to acquire the useful knowledge of the forms and practices of Parliament. His example, in this respect, may be serviceable to young members of Parliament, who are too apt to yield to the perilous temptation of making set speeches "out o' joint i' the time." The propriety of this forbearance might be justified by more than one instance, of men of real oratorical ability, who have failed, by pursuing an opposite course. Mr. Canning's maiden speech was made on the 31st of January, 1794, in favour of the subsidy, proposed to be granted to the King of Sardinia. In the estimation of his friends, and of the House, this speech, though equal to the subject, was hardly on a level with his own fame. It sustained, without materially enhancing, the reputation that he had already acquired. Those whose recollections bear them back to the remote day, in which this great statesman first started into political life, and those, who have only witnessed the matured brilliancy of his career, will alike feel delight in tracing to its source, that rich stream of eloquence which, for more than thirty years, has flowed, majestic and resistless, the pride and ornament of a great nation. When we consider the celebrity which Mr. Canning had obtained at Oxford for the correctness of his taste, and classic elegance of his compositions, it is not to be wondered at, that his first speech should bear a marked analogy, in the structure of its exordium, to one of the most memorable speeches of the Athenian orator.* In this speech the varied powers of its author are tolerably well exemplified, and we may now look back to it as to the dawn of that resistless eloquence, which has since so often

"Wielded at will the fierce democracy."

The language throughout bears the sterling stamp of authenticity, though the impression is faint as compared with more recent specimens. The periods, indeed, are not

* Demosthenes, Philip. 1st.

so exquisitely polished, as when orally delivered by Mr. Canning they *must* have been. But the masterly array of the argument, that is to say, the strongest and most indubitable characteristic of all, is preserved in glowing, vigorous perfection. A capital instance of this may be observed in the two-fold division of the question. The simple proposition, which a less expert logician would have first discussed, is reserved, with admirable dexterity, until the specious disjunctive is disposed of. The former—the real point to be established—is thrown by with apparent indifference; while the latter, though really a subordinate topic, is discussed with an earnestness which presupposes the concession of the main question itself. Men's minds being once engaged in details—calculating the *plus* and *minus* of expediency—forgetting that a few minutes before they had rejected a measure *in toto*, of which they are now deliberately arranging the several parts—just at this unguarded moment, the orator comes down upon them, with a torrent of argumentative declamation against the objections to the main question, enlisting their passions and prejudices as he goes along, until he at length excites alarm for the very existence of the British Constitution, and an antipathy to the revolutionary principles, which, he urges, are involved in the doctrine of his opponents.

These are a few of the leading features of a speech, the intrinsic merits of which are really considerable.

The Address on the King's Speech, at the opening of the Parliament, in 1795, was moved by Sir E. Knatchbull, and seconded by Mr. Canning. His speech, on this occasion, contains some fine bursts of eloquence. The passage relating to the cruelties practised by Buonaparte in Switzerland, is an impressive and deeply affecting description. Mr. Pitt, in the circle of his private friends, spoke of this speech of Mr. Canning's, and of the admirable address with which it was delivered, as one that afforded an indication of even greater abilities than fame—which had been busy in his praise—had hitherto awarded him.

Parliament was dissolved in the spring of 1796. A short

time previous to its dissolution, Mr. Canning accepted the office of Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs to Lord Grenville. The next session he was returned for Wendover. During the session of 1796 and 1797 Mr. Canning chiefly confined his attention to the immediate and laborious duties which his office required.

The speech of Mr. Canning, on the Slave Trade, in the first volume of this work, is as fully and faithfully exhibitive of the various merits of his oratorical style as any speech throughout it. It abounds in the most felicitous points of wit, of argument, of classical beauty, and historical illustration. From his entrance into Parliament, and even before it, Mr. Canning contributed his most assiduous and earnest endeavours to the glorious effort of redeeming humanity from the disgrace, and the British nation from the deep dishonour of the Slave Trade. He was one of the "fearless and faithful few," who resisted the powerful interests opposed to the abolition of this nefarious traffic, at a period when there was the greatest merit—because there was then the greatest difficulty—in resistance. At the outset of Mr. Canning's public life, the Slave Trade was openly and boldly upheld as a source of social strength—as a legitimate and necessary means of national wealth. The abolitionists were libelled as fanatical enthusiasts;—amid misrepresentations of motives, and calumnies of conduct, however, he fought the good fight, side by side of the benevolent Wilberforce, and lived to rejoice with him, and with the other good men engaged in the same cause, at the triumph they had achieved in the cause of afflicted humanity. The consummation of this great work of comprehensive benevolence did not take place until 1824, when, under Mr. Canning's auspices, the Slave Trade Piracy Bill was passed, which made this horrible system of man-stealing a capital felony. Not contented with the abolition of the Slave Trade, Mr. Canning was engaged—and it was among the last of his legislative efforts—in devising safe, politic, and efficient measures for the gradual abolition of slavery itself. To no cause was

he more anxiously and usefully devoted; and for no cause more than that of the unemancipated slave, should we be disposed to say, were it permitted us to enter into a compromise with the ordinances of Providence—

"He should have died hereafter."

On the 20th of November, 1797, the first number of the Anti-jacobin Review, or Weekly Examiner, appeared. Of this work Mr. Gifford was the editor;—Mr. Canning was the most popular contributor;—Lord Seaford, Mr. G. Ellis, and Mr. Frere, were also understood to be very powerful supporters of it. The object of the work was to attack, by ridicule, the principles of unrestrained democracy then desolating France, which, as a nation, had long ceased to move in its regular and natural orbit, and which now threatened destruction to every well organized system of government throughout Europe, by attempting to whirl surrounding nations in its dangerous deviation. Some persons, formidable less for their number and talents than for their spirit and activity, which served them as an equivalent, strove to disseminate, what are well understood by the term "*French principles*" in this country. To the success of their mischievous machinations, the Anti-jacobin Review served as a most salutary check. The pieces attributed to Mr. Canning in the Anti-jacobin were characterized by a light, sportive, and satirical vein of humour. "The Knife Grinder;" "The inscription on the cell of Mrs. Brownrig, the prenticecide;" the more elaborate and serious satire of "New Morality;" and "The Elegy on the Death of Jean Bon St. Andre," are amongst the most admired poetical contributions to the work. The exclusive merit of these compositions, however, does not belong to Mr. Canning; indeed it is almost impossible to distinguish the portions which belong to each author, as most of the poems in the Anti-jacobin were joint compositions; and as Mr. Canning avowed none of them—none of them can properly be cited as his compositions. Although Mr. Canning did not authorise the asser-

tion of his claim to any particular piece in the publication, he did not disavow his connexion with it, nor did he show a disposition at any time to retract any of the sentiments contained in the Anti-jacobin. He adhered with constancy to a declaration which he made in Parliament in 1807:—"That he felt no shame for the character or principles of the 'Anti-jacobin;' nor any other sorrow for the share he had had in it, than that which the imperfection of *his* pieces was calculated to inspire."

The union of Great Britain and Ireland was propounded to the English Parliament in 1799. In the discussions upon this most important subject Mr. Canning took a prominent part. It is impossible to read his two excellent speeches in support of this measure without being satisfied, that it was the conviction of the speaker, that great and substantial advantages would be derived from it as well to Ireland as to England. It is well known that the Irish Parliament were at first adverse to a legislative union. The circumstances attendant upon the accomplishment of this measure belong properly to the history of the empire. Without, therefore, inopportunely discussing here whether the measure itself was an unrighteous infringement of the *final adjustment* of 1782, or pronouncing upon the purity of the political morality by which Lord Castlereagh conciliated the opposition which was at first raised to it in Ireland—it is more accordant with the design of this Memoir, to remark, that in the speeches of Mr. Canning, as well as of those of Mr. Pitt, on this occasion, Roman Catholic Emancipation was held out in terms too plain to be mistaken as an inducement to the Roman Catholics of Ireland to accede to it.

Many persons in this country—some of them deservedly respected for their station and talents—under the denomination of "Pitt Clubs," attribute to that statesman, the discreditable design of double-dealing with the Catholics, by "holding the word of promise to their ear to break it to their hope." It is therefore due in fairness not less to Mr. Pitt than to Mr. Canning, whose opinional attachment to

Mr. Pitt identifies his sentiments with those of that minister to retrieve their characters from the disgrace of this imputed duplicity. The letter of Mr. Pitt to the late King,* previous to his resignation of office, establishes, beyond cavil or contradiction, that the imperious expediency and justice of carrying this question after the Union was the deeply-impressed conviction of his mind; and that an assurance was given by him to the Irish Catholics, that after the Union the question should be carried.

The present is the twenty-eighth year since the legislative enactment of the Union;—yet the claims of the Catholics, to which the faith of the English minister and the honour of the English nation were pledged, have not been conceded. How much longer this measure of long-withheld justice may be delayed, it is not within our province to determine; but it is surely no presumptuous opinion to declare, that the Union has not been productive of the advantages which it might have been, had faith been preserved with Ireland by Catholic Emancipation following quick upon it. And, indeed, the experience of the past warrants the conjecture as to the future, that, until that question is set at rest, which so much agitates men's minds in both countries, every other measure of intended relief will be ineffectual for the tranquillization and prosperity of Ireland. Until the two countries are united, not merely in law, but in affection, by the concession of this question, the expediency and justice of which are founded on the law of nature—the law of the Gospel—on positive treaty;—intestine wars in Ireland will continue to be suppressed by military force—the Insurrection Act, with short intervals of suspension as heretofore, will be the common law of the land—capital and industry can find no resting place there—a ferocious struggle between the oppressors and oppressed will be prolonged—the resources and energies of the nation impover-

* Correspondence between His Majesty George III., Mr. Pitt, and Lord Kenyon, on the Catholic Question.

ished, and its spirit wasted and broken in unnatural and disastrous conflicts.

As many of the most brilliant speeches in the present collection were delivered on the Catholic Question, and as, whenever this great measure of justice shall have been achieved, its success will be mainly attributable to the super-eminent services rendered to it by Mr. Canning, not more by his eloquence than by the spirit of his policy;—it may not be ill-timed or unseasonable to state here, briefly, the grounds on which his advocacy of it mainly rested. He invariably declared that he did not regard the measure as an abstract question of *right*. The participation of the Roman Catholics in political power he supported on the ground of *expediency*—the urgency of which expediency, in his opinion, daily and hourly increased. The subject appeared to him always a question of policy, liable to great and many variations—as to the moral fitness of the time in which it was to be carried—the state of public opinion in England regarding it—and the securities with which it was to be accompanied, so as to allow no reasonable apprehension of insecurity to that system of religion which is associated and incorporated with the political frame of this nation, and by which, it was his opinion, its civil establishments are upheld and consecrated. He proposed securities in the bill of 1813, which, together with the bill, were rejected. These proposed securities dissatisfied those who called for them, and still more dissatisfied the Catholics, for whose relief the measure was intended. From that time forward he declined to be what he termed "a security-grinder," and in the last speech which he ever pronounced upon this question, he pretty intelligibly stated his conviction, that the practice of calling for securities in one House of Parliament, and of rejecting them in another, was an unfair and insincere mode of objection, resorted to by the opponents of the question, for the purpose of defeating any measure whatever of relief. "In this House," said he, "I am twitted for the want of secu-

rities—and in the other, securities are rejected with contempt, and thus this well-established see-saw renders it impossible that any bill should be devised which should escape both Houses." His determination not to support the claims of the Catholics on the abstract principle of right, and his advocacy of their claims, under any circumstances, prevented him from being at any time very popular either amongst the Catholics or their opponents. That he had a higher motive—his country's good—than the expected gratitude of the Catholics to actuate his conduct, is proved by the persevering consistency with which, "through good report and evil report," he advocated their cause, and by the sacrifices which he made in their service. His speech for the Suppression of Unlawful Associations in Ireland, in the fifth volume of the present collection, contains an *épitomé* of the principles on which he supported the claims of the Catholics;—of the Cabinet negociations which, from time to time, the consideration of these claims originated;—and of the frequent instances in which he declined office, and surrendered other favourite objects of his ambition to promote their satisfactory and final adjustment.

In the support of the Catholic Claims, another rule of action which Mr. Canning observed, was to hold no consultation with either the priesthood or laity of the Roman Catholic persuasion in the arrangement of the legislative enactments, which were to accompany, or to be consequent upon, the carrying of the question in Parliament, for he maintained that the duty of Parliament was "to inquire, deliberate, and determine, as to the course which it was wise, upright, and expedient to pursue, and having done so, Parliament should not invite the Catholics to accept or reject, but call upon them to obey." The constant and vehement agitation of the question by the Catholics themselves, he regarded as the natural and necessary consequence of their proscription from the pale of the Constitution; but the time and the manner of their agitating it, and the topics with which they sometimes associated it, were, in his judgment, injudicious

and injurious to the success of their cause. He was wisely sensible, however, that the indiscretion with which a man may advocate the redress of his own wrongs, should not be regarded as a ground of wantonly perpetuating them. "Discontent, indeed, has never yet vented itself in measured, tame, and courtly phrases—there is no record, in the history of nations, of an abject and degraded people being drilled and disciplined into writhe with grace and groan in melody." In reference to the Roman-Catholics of Ireland, it should further be remembered, that if they sometimes exhibit the roughness of the hand of Esau, it is because they have not been attended to, when they spoke in the smoothness of the voice of Jacob.

Mr. Canning was married in July, 1800, to Miss Joan Scott, daughter and co-heiress of General Scott. The elder sister of this lady had been married a short time previously to the Marquis of Titchfield, now Duke of Portland. This matrimonial alliance with Miss Scott was in every respect advantageous to Mr. Canning. Her society rendered him happy—her fortune made him independent—gave weight and authority to his talents—and facilitated his advancement to those high stations in the Government of the country, to which, by the exercise of those talents, he had vindicated his qualification. Early in 1801, the disappointment of Mr. Pitt, in all his efforts to induce the King to confirm that expectation which had been held out to the Catholics of Ireland at the time of the Union, led to the resignation of that minister, and the dissolution of his administration. Several poetic effusions—decrying the administration of Mr. Addington, who succeeded Mr. Pitt as Prime Minister, were erroneously attributed to Mr. Canning:—with the exception of the "Pilot that weathered the Storm;" there is sufficient authority for stating that any of the poems, on

"THE PILOT THAT WEATHERED THE STORM.

If hush'd the loud whirlwind that ruffled the deep,
The sky, if no longer dark tempests deform;
When our perils are past, shall our gratitude sleep?
No!—Here's to the Pilot that weather'd the Storm!

political subjects, which appeared about this period, were composed by him.

This admirable lyric composition was avowedly written by Mr. Canning, and was composed for the first meeting of the Pitt Club, to the formation of which Mr. Canning was mainly instrumental. It is worthy of remark, that none of the members of Mr. Addington's administration attended the early meetings of the club, though many of them have since perverted its anniversary meetings to purposes of intolerance.

At the footstool of Power let flattery fawn,
Let Faction her idols extol to the skies;
To Virtue, in humble resentment withdrawn,
Unblamed may the merits of gratitude rise.

And shall not his memory to Britain be dear,
Whose example with envy all nations behold;
A Statesman unbiass'd by int'rest or fear,
By power uncorrupted, untainted by gold?

Who, when terror and doubt through the universe reign'd,
While rapine and treason their standards unfurl'd,
The heart and the hopes of his country maintain'd,
And one kingdom preserved 'midst the wreck of the world.

Unheeding, unthankful, we bask in the blaze,
While the beams of the sun in full majesty shine;
When he sinks into twilight, with fondness we gaze,
And mark the mild lustre that gilds his decline.

Lo! Pitt, when the course of thy greatness is o'er,
Thy talents, thy virtues, we fondly recall!
Now justly we prize thee, when lost we deplore;
Admired in thy zenith, but loved in thy fall!

O! take, then—for dangers by wisdom repell'd,
For evils, by courage and constancy braved—
O take, for a throne by thy counsels upheld,
The thanks of a people thy firmness has saved!

And, O! if again the rude whirlwind should rise!
The dawning of Peace should fresh darkness deform!
The regrets of the good, and the fears of the wise,
Shall turn to the Pilot that weather'd the Storm!

entirely at variance with the principles of those who originally instituted it, and of Mr. Pitt himself. It is a curious fact, moreover, that it is now principally supported by the very members and followers of an administration, in opposition to which it was originally instituted.

The course pursued by Mr. Canning, on the formation of Mr. Addington's administration, was this:—he abstained altogether from all parliamentary attendance, with the exception of his motion relating to Trinidad, for these reasons: Mr. Pitt supported, and wished his friends to support, Mr. Addington's government; Mr. Canning could not reconcile it to his opinions to do so. But, on the other hand, he did not think it right to oppose Mr. Addington in Parliament, having obtained his seat through Mr. Pitt's influence. He, therefore, abstained from taking a part on any political question till after the dissolution in 1802, when he obtained a seat by his own means. From that time he engaged in a very active opposition to Mr. Addington's government. On the renewal of hostilities with France, he supported Mr. Pitt's policy of vigorously prosecuting the war; but even, in reference to this policy, he carefully distinguished between the measures and the men who recommended them to Parliament; and more than once pretty intelligibly suggested that, to give due efficacy to these measures, it was expedient that the execution of them should be intrusted to other hands.

On the 12th of October, 1801, the ratification of the preliminaries of peace were exchanged in London between Lord Hawkesbury and M. Otto. These preliminaries were the basis of the definitive treaty of Amiens. In the discussions which took place on the preliminaries of peace, and on the definitive treaty about to be entered into with France, Mr. Canning took no further part, than by a slight reference to the former, in the exordium of his speech on the cultivation of the island of Trinidad. Ceylon and Trinidad were among the most important acquisitions of the war. As naval stations, they were both of great value to those parts of the world, to which they respectively belong. Besides its great im-

portance as a naval station, Trinidad was one of the most healthy and productive islands in the West Indies. Towards an improved cultivation of this island, with a view of promoting his favourite measure, "The Abolition of the Slave Trade," Mr. Canning directed his early attention. The principal object of his motion was, that the planters, to whom grants of land in this island were made, should not be entitled to lay claim to indemnity for any supposed losses, which they might sustain from the abolition of the Slave Trade. He proposed that the grants should be disposed of, with the express understanding that the Slave Trade should not be permitted in the island of Trinidad. In this laudable object, to its full extent, he did not succeed: but the motion was attended with a beneficial result of another kind, by preventing the establishment of a Colonial Legislature in Trinidad—a species of legislative assembly which is now felt to be one of the greatest impediments to colonial improvement in those islands, in which it is permitted to exercise the anomalous right of legislating on all matters of internal regulation, independently of the paramount authority of Parliament. This beneficial result is adverted to with sentiments of just pride in Mr. Canning's memorable speech, in explanation of the measures, adopted by His Majesty's Government, for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Slave Population, in 1824.

"With respect to Trinidad, I cannot omit to observe that, about twenty years ago, I, in this House, called the attention of Government to that colony, the possession of which was then recently confirmed to us by the peace; and submitted a motion, to the effect that Trinidad should not be placed on the same footing as our other colonies, by a grant of a Legislative Constitution; but should be reserved under the unfettered dominion of the Crown, for the purpose of experiments for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Slaves. One part of my proposition was, indeed, that the importation of slaves into Trinidad should be entirely discontinued. In that object, I did not succeed; but I cannot forbear to congratulate myself and the House, if that motion

of mine, though not altogether successful, has had the effect of keeping Trinidad in a state, in which an example may be set there by the direction of the executive power, uncontrollable by any legislative assembly."

In 1803, Mr. Canning supported a series of resolutions, moved by Mr. Patten, containing aggravated charges of misconduct against ministers. In his speech, on this occasion, he declared, in no equivocal terms, that the present ministers were unworthy the confidence of the country, and incapable of administering its affairs. This speech is also remarkable, as being the only one pronounced by him in opposition to Mr. Pitt. It should, however, be borne in mind that, besides the becoming deference with which Mr. Canning differed from him, the opposition is of a nature, calculated rather to conciliate than displease his friend, as Mr. Pitt is pointed out by Mr. Canning, as the person best qualified, at that crisis of the country's difficulty, to occupy the place of Mr. Addington.

The part, which Mr. Canning took, in the ensuing session of Parliament, on the motion for Inquiring into the Conduct of the Irish Government, evinces the same deep interest that pervades all his speeches on questions, connected with the misdirected policy pursued towards that ill-fated country.

The conduct of France, in the early part of the year 1803, threatened the immediate renewal of hostilities. This apprehension was excited by the military and naval preparations, carried on in the ports of Holland, which led to the adoption of additional and necessary precautions on the part of England. The posture of European politics, at this period, is fully exhibited in Mr. Canning's speech on the negociations with France. The opposition to the existing administration, and the public distrust in their measures, increased with the increasing difficulties of the country. On the 3rd of May, 1804, Mr. Addington resigned. Consequent upon his resignation, an ineffectual negociation was carried on to form an administration, including the chiefs of

the three political parties, Mr. Pitt, Mr. Fox, and Lord Grenville. At length, an administration was formed, and Mr. Pitt once more resumed the premiership.

Early in the ensuing year, the impeachment of Lord Melville, for the employment of the balances of public money for his own benefit, when Treasurer of the Navy, was instituted. Lord Melville had been, for many years, the intimate friend, and the staunchest supporter of Mr. Pitt. The vindication of his own conduct, in some transactions referred to in the tenth report of the Naval Commissioners, devolved upon Mr. Canning, as Treasurer of the Navy. Throughout the inquiry, he proved that he was "clear in his high office." The best mode for conducting this impeachment, was the last subject on which Mr. Pitt addressed the House of Commons. He died on Thursday, the 23rd of January, the anniversary of that day on which, five-and-twenty years before, he had first been a member of the British senate. The result of this impeachment was, that the House of Commons pronounced Lord Melville guilty of gross misconduct in that office, in the administration of which the House of Lords acquitted him of every charge. It has been well observed by the author of the Political Life of Lord Liverpool, that "The Commons, in fact, were urged by the managers to attempt to prove too much, and strangely jumbled facts and arguments in their articles; so that many peers, who considered Lord Melville guilty of parts of the charges, could not pronounce him so on the whole of many of them".

The death of Mr. Pitt was soon followed by the dissolution of the administration of which he was the head. In the changes, consequent upon the introduction of the Whig party into power, Mr. Canning was succeeded by his friend, Mr. Sheridan, in the office of Treasurer of the Navy. After the death of Mr. Pitt, Mr. Canning acknowledged no leader. In 1812, in a speech to his constituents at Liverpool, he thus expressed the veneration in which he held the

memory of that statesman, and the emulous fidelity with which he was determined to imitate his conduct, and abide by his principles:—

"Gentlemen, you see that I speak to you as freely of the conduct and policy of the Government, as of the conduct of those to whom I am politically opposed. To one man, while he lived, I was devoted with all my heart and with all my soul. Since the death of Mr. Pitt, I acknowledge no leader. My political allegiance lies buried in his grave—but I have, though not his immediate counsels to follow, his memory to cherish and revere. So far as I knew his opinions on subjects which were in his time, as well as now, of great public interest, I have adhered, and shall adhere, to those opinions as the guides of my public conduct. Where I can only reason from analogy on new questions which may arise, I shall endeavour to apply to those questions, whatever they may be, the principles which I imbibed and inherit from him; principles which, I well know, have alone recommended me to your choice this day."

Shortly after the death of Mr. Pitt, a Whig administration was formed under Lord Grenville, as First Lord of the Treasury, and Mr. Fox, as Secretary for Foreign Affairs, who preferred that situation from the facilities with which, he presumed, it would have presented him, in bringing the negociations with France to an amicable conclusion.

Mr. Canning now became the most active and leading member of the opposition to the new administration. He commenced a series of severe attacks upon the conduct and measures of the Whigs, in his opposition to the appointment of the Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench (Lord Ellenborough) to a seat in the Cabinet. In the inexpediency and impropriety of this appointment all parties seem now to concur, and indeed it was excused, at the time at which it took place, on no better plea than the necessity of making the great talents of that noble lord available for the defence of the measures of administration. Mr. Canning also gave very earnest and effective opposition to Mr. Windham's

celebrated Limited Service Bill. This bill was introduced with a view of organizing the defence of the country upon an approved theory; a subject which had engaged much of the attention of the present ministers, as well as their predecessors. An outline of Mr. Windham's plan is preserved in the present publication. The objections to it are urged with great point and ability in the speeches of Mr. Canning, and the validity of his objections was sustained by the fact, that although the bill passed, after much opposition in both Houses;—for all practical purposes it was utterly inoperative. The principal part of the measure itself was shortly afterwards defeated in Parliament by a repeal of the clause limiting the service to seven years, which was so altered as to grant permission, and hold out encouragement, to the soldier to enlist for life at the close of his seven years' service.

At the time that Mr. Fox took upon him the office of Foreign Secretary, his health was rapidly declining. The principal object to which he devoted his exertions during the brief period that he held the reins of power, was the opening of negotiations with France, with a view of conducting them to the establishment of a basis of permanent peace between the two countries. Whilst the British diplomatists were engaged in the furtherance of these negociations at Paris, that eminent statesman died, in the month of August, 1806, amid the mourning of attached friends, and the regrets of an admiring country. He closed a career of honourable, consistent, sometimes perhaps, misjudging, but always sincere, straight-forward, and manly conduct, at a time when his services were wanted most. In the language of his eloquent friend and eulogist, Mr. Sheridan, "he died in the spirit of peace, struggling to extend it to the world." Well and truly was he entitled to exclaim on the motion—the last he ever made in Parliament—for the Abolition of the Slave Trade—"That if, during the forty years he had sat in Parliament, he had been so fortunate as to accomplish that object, and that only,

he should think he had done enough, and could retire from public life with the conscious satisfaction that he had done his duty." That object he achieved—a triumph, which leaves every other triumph of humanity and justice out of sight behind it, and for which, to the end of time, mankind will revere his name and bless his memory.

Lord Howick succeeded Mr. Fox as Secretary for Foreign Affairs. In February, 1807, his lordship, with the concurrence of Lord Grenville, in the Upper House of Parliament, introduced a bill "For Securing to all His Majesty's Subjects the privilege of Serving in the Army and Navy." A misunderstanding arose between the King and his ministers, as to the extent to which His Majesty had given his sanction to this bill. The King considered at first that the object of the bill was only to make the law correspond with itself in England and Ireland, or simply to allow Catholic officers to act in England, as by the legislative relief afforded in 1793, they were entitled to act in Ireland. Not approving of the bill in the shape in which it was submitted to Parliament, the King was desirous that it should be withdrawn. His Majesty, moreover, required the noble lords (Howick and Grenville) to pledge themselves not to agitate the subject. With this requisition Lords Howick and Grenville respectfully refused to comply. They asserted a right to declare their opinion in favour of the bill, and to renew the present, or any other measure connected with the question, from time to time. This difference between the King and his principal ministers, led to the dissolution of the Whig ministry. A new administration was formed in April, 1806, under the Duke of Portland. Mr. Canning accepted the Seals of the Foreign Office, and, for the first time, became a Cabinet minister. In his speech on Mr. Brand's motion, on the 9th of April, relative to the changes of administration, will be found an explanation of the motives of his conduct, and of the circumstances under which he accepted office at this period.

The season in which the new ministry came into power

was one of unexampled difficulty. After the battles of Austrelitz and Jena, Buonaparte may be said to have arrived at the summit of his power; Sweden was then the only ally of England. Denmark professed neutrality, but the overgrown power of France, and the subserviency which Denmark might feel it her interest to pay to a power whose victorious arms she could not resist, rendered her neutrality, if not insincere in its profession, at least doubtful as to its continuance. The morality of the conduct pursued towards Denmark by England, at this crisis of her affairs, has been the subject of severe animadversion. The expedition against Copenhagen was undertaken with Mr. Canning's sanction, as Foreign Minister, and is supposed to have been projected by him;—a short explanation, therefore, of the circumstances connected with it may be appropriate—especially as the speeches of Mr. Canning on this subject are reported less satisfactorily than his speeches on any other important question, although they are spoken of in terms of the highest commendation by those who were present at the delivery of them. The expedition, which terminated in the bombardment of Copenhagen, and the delivery of her fleet, citadel, and marine stores, to our forces, was certainly one painful in its nature, but unavoidable in its necessity. By a secret article of the treaty of Tilsit, Buonaparte bound Russia to join and support him in compelling England to accept an inglorious, and insecure, peace, or to form a confederacy of all the naval powers of Europe against England, and more especially of Denmark and Portugal. Of this secret article, the English Government received satisfactory assurance. To counteract this confederacy on the part of the enemy, was the just, the obvious, and necessary policy of England. The existence of the secret confederacy, and the necessity of defeating its objects, are thus adverted to in the speech of the Lords Commissioners, at the opening of the session of 1808. After having stated that the object of the confederacy was to bring to bear against different points of His Majesty's dominions, the whole of the naval force of Europe, and specifically the fleets

of Portugal and Denmark, the Royal speech proceeds—"To place those fleets out of the power of such a confederacy, became, therefore, the indispensable duty of His Majesty. In the execution of this duty, so far as related to the Danish fleet, His Majesty has commanded us to assure you, that it was with the deepest reluctance that His Majesty found himself compelled, after his earnest endeavours to open a negotiation with the Danish Government had failed, to authorise his commanders to resort to the extremity of force; but that he has the greatest satisfaction in congratulating you upon the successful execution of this painful but necessary service. We are commanded further to acquaint you, that the course which His Majesty had to pursue with respect to Portugal, was happily of a nature more congenial to His Majesty's feelings: that the timely and unreserved communication by the Court of Lisbon of the demands and designs of France, while it confirmed to His Majesty the authenticity of the advice which he had received from other quarters, entitled that Court to His Majesty's confidence in the sincerity of the assurances by which that communication was accompanied. The fleet of Portugal was destined by France to be employed as an instrument of vengeance against Great Britain; that fleet has been secured from the grasp of France, and is now employed in conveying to its American dominions the hopes and fortunes of the Portuguese monarchy."

The two principal objections to the expedition, urged in very powerful speeches by the Knight of Kerry and Mr. Ponsonby, were, first—That, as Denmark had committed no *overt* act in violation of its avowed neutrality, its sincerity was not to be questioned, and that, therefore, the bombardment was indefensible. Secondly—That this measure led to the provocation of hostilities with Russia. As to the sincerity of the professions of Denmark, they were put fairly to the test, and were found to consist in an insincere and outward show of neutrality. The test resorted to was this:—Mr. Jackson, formerly our resident at Berlin, was

instructed to repair to the resident of the Prince Royal of Denmark, and to call upon His Royal Highness for an unequivocal declaration of the intentions of that Court, and for a pledge of the execution of those intentions, if they were not hostile to Great Britain. This pledge was the delivery of the Danish fleet into the possession of the British admiral, under the most solemn stipulation, that it should be restored at the conclusion of the war between this country and France. Should this be refused, and should the British negociation have in vain exhausted every argument and effort to obtain the Prince Royal's consent to it, as the foundation of a treaty of alliance, and general co-operation between the two countries, he was directed to announce, that it would be enforced by the British armament assembled in the Sound. The issue is well known: the pledge was refused to be given; and Copenhagen was subjected, very unwillingly on the part of our commanders, to the horrors of a bombardment. On the 4th of September, the fleet, citadel, dock-yards, and marine stores, were delivered to our forces.

To the assertion that this step led to hostilities with Russia, the following fact stated in the speech of Mr. Canning, on Mr. Sharp's motion, furnishes a satisfactory refutation: "It had been insisted on by Hon. Gentlemen opposite, that the expedition to Copenhagen had produced the war with Russia. If the papers on the table did not prove that not to have been the case—if the Russian declaration since published—if the conduct of Russia towards Sweden did not disprove it, he could refer to the authority of a person of the first rank in Russia, to prove the contrary to have been the case. Count Romanzow, in his interview with the English inhabitants at St. Petersburgh, stated, as one of the instances of our barbarous conduct to Russia, that we had detained a frigate laden with specie, to which they replied, that it had happened after a declaration of war: 'Aye!' said Count Romanzow, 'but did we not suffer the Astræa frigate, laden with specie, to depart after

we had determined to go to war with Great Britain.' The Astræa had sailed from Memel on the 27th of July, months before any declaration of war, and weeks before any intelligence could have been received of the expedition to Copenhagen. This circumstance showed that that expedition was not the cause of the war."

One more extract from the speech of Lord Granville Leveson Gower, our ambassador at St. Petersburgh, suffices to furnish irresistible evidence of the fact, that the menace of a northern confederacy against England formed part of the secret articles of the treaty of Tilsit. "When he himself had felt it his duty to ask information from Russia as to the secret articles of the treaty of Tilsit, the Russian ministers did not deny them, but simply advised him to use all the influence he had with his Court to make peace with France. It was by making peace with France that we could alone hope to escape the ill effects of those secret arrangements."

The glorious breaking out of a spirit of national independence in Spain, now challenged the attention, the surprise, and admiration of the civilized world. The prompt sympathy with which England communicated the generous impulse of her own love of freedom, and gave the aid of her active co-operation to an oppressed people, in their resistance to a despotic usurpation of power, is a proud event which, even in the history of England, has been rarely equalled—certainly never surpassed. Upon Mr. Canning, as Secretary for Foreign Affairs, devolved the most active, important, and responsible portion of the duties connected with that great movement on the vast theatre of European warfare. For his services, at this all-important crisis in the mighty struggle, for the deliverance of the nations of Europe from the dominion of France;—Great Britain, and Spain, and, indeed, all Europe should unite in raising a lasting monument of gratitude to his memory. On Spanish ground was planted the lever which wrested, from the outstretched hand of Buonaparte, the sceptre of universal dominion, which he

was just about to clutch—there the foundation of his power was first shaken—there the charm of his ascendancy was broken. To Lord Wellington is unquestionably due the merit of having struck the blow, but to Mr. Canning belongs the merit of the policy that aimed and directed it—and to him too belongs the credit and the praise of having supplied, by the vigour of his measures in the Cabinet, the efficient means which enabled the illustrious hero of Waterloo to disenchant the spirit of despotism of the magic of victory, and to complete that series of renowned achievements which have raised the name of the Duke of Wellington to rank with the names of the great heroes and benefactors of mankind. To the part which he had borne by recommending and enforcing the policy—wise as it was glorious—pursued by Great Britain towards Spain, Mr. Canning ever afterwards referred with sentiments of just pride and exultation. In reference to it, on one occasion in Parliament, he declared, that, "if there was any part of his political life in which he (Mr. Canning) gloried, it was, that in the face of every difficulty, of every discouragement and prophesy of failure, his had been the hand which had committed England to an alliance with Spain, to an alliance with a country robbed of her government, and writhing, for the time, under the fangs of the conqueror."

The state of our relations with the Continent, during the years 1807 and 1808, imposed on our Government a long course of diplomatic negociation. Mr. Canning was the official organ by whose pen these communications were to be made. His state papers will be referred to in after-times, as furnishing the most unequivocal proofs of the solidity, clearness, and elegance of his mind. On the joint application of the Emperors Alexander and Napoleon, at Erfurth, to England, to put an end to the horrors of war, Mr. Canning was *ex-officio* intrusted with the negociation;—his answer to the letter of the two Emperors was written with superior talent. He repeated the readiness and ardent desire of His Majesty, to negociate a

peace, but only on such terms as could be pronounced compatible with his own honour, and the lasting repose and security of Europe. "If many states," said Mr. Canning, "had been subverted, and still more threatened with subversion, it was one comfort to His Majesty, to reflect that no part of such convulsions could be imputed to him. He was ready to admit that all such changes were at variance with the policy of Great Britain; and if the cause of such misery could be traced to the stagnation of commerce, it was not in his disposition—it was not in the character of the people over whom he swayed the sceptre—to rejoice in the misery of even those who had combined against him; though it was scarcely a matter of regret, that endeavours to annihilate the commerce of his subjects had recoiled on their enemies. National safety was the only motive which led him into the war; but, during its progress, new motives had presented themselves, since different powers had solicited his assistance in vindication of their independence. He had not bound himself to Spain by any formal instrument, but he had openly contracted engagements with that country by no means less binding on his mind than the most solemn treaties whatever; he therefore thought that, in an overture for negociating a general peace, his relations with the Spanish monarchy would have been distinctly considered, and that the Government, which acted in the name of Ferdinand VII. was to be regarded as a party in every negociation in which His Britannic Majesty was invited to engage."

To this able note, a short reply was made by the Russian minister, intimating his close alliance with Napoleon, and his acknowledgment of Joseph Buonaparte King of Spain; but M. de Champagny's reply was studiously insulting:—

"How is it possible for the French Government to entertain the proposal which has been made to it, of admitting the Spanish insurgents to the negociation? What would the English Government have said, had it been proposed to them to admit the Catholic insurgents of Ireland? France, without having any treaties with them, has been in communica-

tion with them, has made them promises, and has frequently sent them succours."

Mr. Canning, in returning an answer to Count Romanzoff, said—"The King was astonished how it could be imagined that he would agree to commence a negociation by first renouncing the cause of the Spanish nation, and of its lawful monarchy, merely to gratify the views of the author of an usurpation which had no proper parallel in the annals of history. It was His Majesty's hope, that the Emperor Alexander, partaking in these overtures, would have granted a security to his Royal Master, against the proposal of a condition, the effects of which were so unjust, and its example so fatal. He could not conceive by what motives of duty, or interest, or by what principles of policy influencing Russia, His Imperial Majesty could believe himself forced to acknowledge the right which France had assumed of deposing and incarcerating friendly sovereigns, and transferring to himself, in a forcible manner, the allegiance of independent nations. If these were, in fact, the principles to which the Emperor was inviolably atached, and which he had conspired with France to establish by war, and maintain by peace, sincerely did His Britannic Majesty lament a resolution by which the sufferings of Europe might be aggravated and protracted; but His Majesty felt resolved, by the consciousness that the continuance of the calamities of war was not to be attributed to him."

The letters from Mr. Canning to Mr. Pinckney, the American ambassador, and the despatches from the former to Mr. Erskine, relative to the dispute with America, were also considered master-pieces of diplomatic correspondence. The altered tone of respect and deference, from one of arrogant and haughty superiority, in the Government of America, produced by the policy of Mr. Canning, and the closing an apprehended breach between the two countries, which the indiscretion of our British minister had widened, are not the least of the many proofs which he has given of his peculiar

fitness for presiding over the foreign policy of England. As the instructions for arranging the disputed points proceeded from the Foreign Office, and as Mr. Canning was the minister principally responsible for them, a narrative of the transaction properly belongs to this sketch of his public life.

The points in dispute related first to the affair of the Chesapeake, secondly to the restrictions upon neutral trade, which Buonaparte had compelled this country to enact in self-defence. Upon the first of these points the most ample reparation had been offered. We had proposed, first—a formal disavowal by His Majesty, of the act of Admiral Berkeley; secondly—the restoration of the men forcibly taken from on board the Chesapeake, reserving to His Majesty the right of claiming, in a regular way, from the American Government, the discharge of such of them as might prove, upon investigation, to be either natural-born subjects of Great Britain, or deserters from the British service; and, thirdly—a pecuniary provision, suitable to their respective situations in life, for the widows or orphans of such men (not being subjects of Great Britain, nor deserters) as had been unfortunately killed on board the Chesapeake. In return we required, first—a disavowal on the part of the American Government of the detention, by Commodore Barron, of deserters from our service; of his denial that he had any such persons on board the ships under his command, and of his refusal to deliver them upon demand; secondly—a like disavowal of the outrages committed on the persons or property of British subjects at Norfolk, or elsewhere, in consequence of this affair; and, thirdly—an engagement that the American Government should not in future countenance any of its agents, civil or military, in encouraging desertion from His Majesty's service. These proposals, our minister, Mr. Erskine, was instructed to repeat. We had formerly required, as a preliminary, that the proclamation of July 2, 1807, by which our ships of war were interdicted from the American harbours, while those of France were allowed a free resort there, should be withdrawn. We now, in conse-

quence of some qualifying language of Mr. Maddison, relaxed from this demand, admitted that of the exclusion of the ships of war of both belligerent powers from the ports of a neutral state, neither belligerent had a right to complain, and, upon this ground, we consented not to insist upon the formal recall of the proclamation, provided the French ships of war should, in point of fact, be excluded from the ports of the United States. It was still necessary that either the proclamation should be withdrawn, or its operation formally declared to be at an end; but it would be sufficient to record either measure in the same instrument, or at the same time, with the terms of reparation which the King of England offered. For the purpose of shortening the discussion, and simplifying its arrangement, as far as possible, Mr. Erskine was instructed that it was now no longer thought necessary to require a specific engagement from the American Government, that it would not in future countenance any of its agents, in encouraging desertion, this point being, as it was understood to be, provided for by a special act of Congress. And His Majesty would be contented to waive any demand for retrospective disavowals on the part of the American States, they being, on the other hand, contented to receive back the men forcibly taken out of the Chesapeake, as the single and sufficient act of reparation. The King, however, would still add a provision for the widows and orphans of the men killed, but as an act of his own spontaneous generosity.

The arrangement proposed respecting the embargo and the Orders in Council, was equally simple and equally fair; there was also every reason to believe that it was conformable to the disposition of the American Government itself. Mr. Maddison, Mr. Albert Galatin, and Mr. Smith, the American Secretary of State, led Mr. Erskine to believe, first—That America, on Great Britain's consenting to withdraw the Orders in Council, was prepared contemporaneously to withdraw the interdiction of her harbours to our ships of war, and all Non-intercourse and Non-importation Acts, as far as

respected Great Britain; leaving them in force towards France, and the powers under French control. Secondly—That America would renounce, during the war, the pretension of carrying on with the enemy's colonies, all trade from which she was excluded during peace. The third condition had been discussed between Mr. Canning and Mr. Pinckney, the American ambassador, in England; and that minister had expressed his opinion that it would not be objected to by his Government. It was, that Great Britain, for the purpose of securing the operation of the embargo as it respected France, and of the *bonâ fide* intention of America to prevent her citizens from trading with France, and the powers adopting and acting under the French decrees, should be at liberty to capture all such American vessels as might be found attempting to trade with the ports of any of those powers; without which security, it was stated, for the observance of the embargo, the raising it nominally with respect to Great Britain alone, would, in fact, raise it with respect to all the world. It was added, that His Majesty, upon receiving a distinct and official recognition of these three conditions, would lose no time in sending to America, a minister fully empowered to consign them to a formal and regular treaty.

These were Mr. Erskine's instructions; they were clear and explicit, and he was at liberty to communicate them at full to the American Secretary of State; and he was directed, that, if the arrangement was not made the subject of a convention, it should be settled by the exchange of ministerial notes, dated on the same day, and reciprocally delivered at the same time. This provision was intended to guard against the possibility of his committing himself, by a written proposal, in the uncertainty of what might be the nature of the answer returned to it. Overlooking this, however, that minister delivered in a note to Mr. Smith, in which he departed as widely from the spirit as from the letter of his instructions. He stated, that as the Congress had evinced an intention of passing certain laws, which would place the relations of Great Britain with the United States, upon an equal footing in all

respects with the other belligerent powers, and as the Non-intercourse Act was considered as having produced this state of equality, he was authorised to offer, on the part of His Majesty, an honourable reparation for the affair of the Chesapeake, the restoration of the men taken out of her, and a suitable provision for the sufferers on that occasion. Thus it appears that Mr. Erskine omitted all mention whatever of the proclamation of July, 1807, positive as his instructions were, that the withdrawal of that edict, or a formal declaration that its operation was at an end, was to be the preliminary and indispensable condition. The consequence of this omission was, that, if the Non-intercourse Act were suffered to expire, the proclamation might revive, and the inequality between the two belligerents be thereby restored. The reservation of His Majesty's right to reclaim, in a regular way, from the American Government, such of the men who had been taken out of the Chesapeake, as were either his natural-born subjects, or had deserted from his service, was also omitted; and the intended provision for the relatives of those who had fallen, was proposed without this essential restriction, brought forward at once as part of the reparation originally offered, and thus converted by him from an act of spontaneous generosity into one of positive obligation.

Mr. Erskine's proposal, therefore, unqualified as it was, appeared like an entire concession, and could not fail of being accepted. The acceptance, however, was conveyed by Mr. Smith in most ungracious and disrespectful language. "As it appeared," he said in his reply, 'that His Britannic Majesty, in making this offer, derived a motive from the equality then existing in the relations of the United States with the two belligerent powers, the President owed it to the occasion and to himself to let it be understood, that this equality resulted from a state of things growing out of distinct considerations. The reparation offered, would be considered by the President, when fulfilled, as a satisfaction for the insult and injury of which he had complained; but I have it," said the American Secretary, "in express charge from the President to state,

that, while he forbears to insist on a farther punishment of the offending officer, he is not the less sensible of the justice and utility of such an example, nor the less persuaded that it would best comport with what is due from his Britannic Majesty to his own honour.' So intent was Mr. Erskine upon bringing to a conclusion a dispute which had so long been pending, that, forgetting what was due to the dignity of his Sovereign, he expressed no resentment whatever at this disrespectful language, and, supposing the affair of the Chesapeake was now finally settled, proceeded to arrange the other point in question as summarily, and with equal neglect of his instructions. He delivered in a second note, on the day after his first, saying—That His Majesty having anticipated the favourable change whihc the Non-importation Act had produced, had instructed him to communicate to the American Government, his determination of sending an envoy extraordinary to the United States, with full powers to conclude a treaty on all the points of the relations between the two countries. In the meantime, His Majesty would be willing to withdraw his Orders in Council, so far as they respected America, in the persuasion that the President would issue a proclamation for the renewal of the intercourse with Great Britain, and that, whatever difference might arise in interpreting the terms of such an agreement, would be removed in the proposed negociation."

In this proposal, Mr. Erskine's disregard of his instructions was even more remarkable than in the former. The preliminary condition, respecting the withdrawal of the proclamation of July, 1807, was common to both points in dispute; but upon this point, two other conditions, equally indispensable, were equally waived by the British envoy; for he neither proposed, nor even hinted to Mr. Smith, that America must give up the pretension of carrying on any trade with the enemy's colonies from which she was excluded during peace; nor that Great Britain must be allowed to capture all American vessels which should be found trading with the enemy in defiance of the American interdict. The

repeal of the Orders in Council was to depend entirely, and exclusively, on the acceptance of these three conditions, which were precisely stated in his instructions; those instructions were peremptory, and left him no other discretion than that of complying with the wishes of the American Government, if such wishes should be expressed, by anticipating the operation of the treaty, and engaging that His Majesty would withdraw the Orders in Council, on receiving an official note containing the formal engagement of the American Government to adopt these three conditions. Waiving these essential preliminaries, he had begun his correspondence by informing the United States that Great Britain would send an envoy extraordinary, with full powers to conclude a treaty; whereas, he was not authorised to hold out the expectation of any such mission, till he had obtained an authentic and official recognition of the three preliminary conditions.

The American Secretary, perceiving that every thing in fact was thus conceded by the British envoy, notified to him, that the envoy extraordinary would be received by the President with a disposition correspondent to that of his Britannic Majesty; and that, in case the English Orders in Council were withdrawn, a proclamation should be issued, opening the trade with Great Britain. Mr. Erskine, the next day, declared himself authorised to assert that the Orders in Council, as they respected America, would be withdrawn on the 10th of June, following; and received in return, an official declaration, that the President would issue his proclamation, so that the trade might be renewed on the same day. The American Government immediately published the whole correspondence. It was received with exultation by all parties. The federalists boasted, that although the past conduct of the Government had been so servile to one nation, so hostile to another, and so ruinous to their own, they had now been compelled to abandon that system by which they would fain have led the country into an unjust and unnecessary war. At New York, a day of public rejoicing was appointed by the federal republican committee; a grand federal salute was

fired at sunrise; at noon and at sunset the bells rung; the shipping in the harbour were decorated with their flags at mast-head during the day, and the city was illuminated at night. The party who directed these demonstrations of joy, designed them as a triumph over their own Government; the Government, or French party, exulted with better reason, because they had conceded nothing, and, according to Mr. Erskine's conduct, had brought Great Britain to their own terms. The people of both parties, or of neither, universally rejoiced because the prosperity of America was about to be restored; and their restrictions and privations were at an end. The granaries and warehouses, wherein the produce of America had so long been pent, were once more opened; vessels, which had lain idle in harbour, were laden; and the ports, which had been condemned to inactivity, were again enlivened with all the activity and bustle of cheerful industry.

Whatever pleasure was felt in England, at the prospect of renewing its intercourse with the United States, was hardly of a day's duration. Mr. Erskine's despatches reached Government on the 22nd of May—the same ship brought over his correspondence with Mr. Smith, as officially published in America. It was immediately perceived that he had ceded every point in dispute, and in both Houses of Parliament, ministers took the earliest opportunity to declare, that Mr. Erskine's conduct was not only unauthorised by his instructions, but in direct contradiction to them. Mr. Canning, as Secretary for Foreign Affairs, immediately signified to that gentleman, His Majesty's displeasure that any minister of his should have shown himself so far insensible of what was due to the dignity of his Sovereign, as to have consented to receive, and transmit, to be laid before His Majesty, a note containing such expressions as those of Mr. Smith. He was told, that without obtaining one of those conditions, on the obtaining of all of which, the concession of this country was to depend, he had pledged His Majesty to the full extent of that

concession, and thereby placed him in the painful alternative, of having either to disavow an engagement taken in his name, by an accredited agent, or to acquiesce in a measure which had been adopted, not only not in conformity to his views, but in contradiction to his positive directions. His Majesty, it was added, entertained no doubt of the zeal and good intentions by which he had been led to depart from his instructions; but the consequence of such a step, and the publicity which had been given to it by the American Government, rendered it impossible that he should continue in the exercise of his functions, either with satisfaction to himself, or advantage to the public service. Mr. Jackson, therefore, was appointed to replace him.*

The inquiry into the conduct of the Duke of York engrossed the attention of Parliament, and of the public, in the early part of the session of 1809. In that investigation, the pruriency of scandal was gratified—the interest of public morals was little consulted. The private irregularities of His Royal Highness had associated him with an artful and depraved woman—Mrs. Clarke—who contrived to gain an ascendancy over her Royal paramour, which at length brought his official character into suspicion, and exposed him for several weeks to the envenomed shafts of malignant tongues. Of every imputation that implied the slightest stain upon his honour, as Commander-in-Chief, he was perfectly acquitted by the sober and well-judging portion of the community, even at the time when popular indignation was at its height. A few months brought all men over to the same conviction; and the infamy which Mr. Canning declared "must attach somewhere," at last settled on

* The further detail of the important negociations with America, at this period, will be found in the Edinburgh Annual Register of 1810, from which the statement of this transaction is principally taken, as it was found to correspond, in every respect, with the authentic copies of the whole correspondence which was laid before Parliament.—EDITOR.]

the real delinquents—Mrs. Clarke—and the profligate squad of her paramours, agents, and abettors, with whom she conspired to destroy the honour of a Prince, whom her threats and attempts at exorbitant extortion could not intimidate. The generous and confiding qualities of heart which the Duke of York eminently possessed, rendered him easily the dupe of a clever and unprincipled courtezan, and motives of avarice prompted her to aim at making him a victim. Mr. Canning, who concluded the debates on the Inquiry by a speech in the Duke of York's defence, spoke at great length, and commented on various parts of the evidence with extreme acuteness and ingenuity, which forcibly indicates how successful he might have been, had he adopted the profession of the law, for which he was originally intended.

Soon afterwards, the attention of Parliament was engaged in the debates on the expedition to the Scheldt, which hung over the debates of two sessions of Parliament, 1809 and 1810, like one of the dull fogs of that river. This enterprise, which a visitation of Providence united, with innumerable military obstacles, in rendering completely disastrous, created great public discontent. Its failure also tended to make the ministry, which projected it, unpopular; and to this state of public difficulty was added, the embarrassment arising from the dissolution of the Government which immediately followed. The descent upon Walcheren is understood to have been planned and projected by Lord Castlereagh; but as the plan of the expedition was submitted to the Cabinet, all who concurred in the adoption of it were equally responsible for the whole of the original plan. Mr. Canning, therefore, as a member of the Cabinet, shared the responsibility of concurring in part of the measures connected with that unprosperous enterprise. He disclaimed, however, to share in the responsibility of having approved of the retention of Walcheren. The decision respecting the retention of that island was, indeed, taken after Mr. Canning and Lord Castlereagh

had resigned. The severe animadversions, which it has been customary to pronounce upon the expedition to the Scheldt, seem to be made without a due regard to the circumstances under which it was undertaken, and the objects which, by it, were sought to be accomplished. From the knowledge which has been obtained, since the peace, of the weakness of the garrison of Antwerp, there is reason to believe that it would have been by no means difficult to have taken that city—to have destroyed the naval arsenal which Buonaparte had formed there—and to have captured all the shipping in the port. The object of the planners of the expedition would thus have been accomplished. The failure was in the execution.

The Memoir of Mr. Canning has now come down to that period at which it becomes the duty of the author to advert to the duel between him and Lord Castlereagh—an incident which requires to be treated with the greatest delicacy. As a reconciliation afterwards took place;—as Lord Castlereagh and Mr. Canning acted together subsequently with perfect cordiality as colleagues in the Cabinet;—and, more especially as both are now no more, it would be highly improper to revive the discussion of the grounds of the quarrel, or to rekindle the animosity which existed between the connexions of the two parties, and which should lie buried for ever in the tomb to which they are both consigned. On the other hand, it is too important an incident in Mr. Canning's life to be passed over in silence. Much misrepresentation of the cause and circumstances of the quarrel has been current, and has obtained considerable credit. It has been stated that Mr. Canning had been actuated by "a spirit of rivalry," and had "accused Lord Castlereagh of gross incapacity," upon which a charge of inconsistency and unworthy submission has been founded against Mr. Canning, for having accepted the embassy to Lisbon when Lord Castlereagh was Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and for having afterwards acted with him in the

Cabinet; whereas, Mr. Canning's representation to the Duke of Portland originated in no such spirit of rivalry, nor did Mr. Canning ever make any such charge of incapacity against Lord Castlereagh. Mr. Canning's statement, indeed, contains a full and clear narrative of the whole transaction; it proves that Mr. Canning did not charge Lord Castlereagh with incapacity as a minister, for it shows that the first proposition made to Mr. Canning, for remedying the inconvenience alleged in his representation to the Duke of Portland, as the cause of tendering his resignation, was one for a new arrangement of the business of the Foreign and War Offices, without removing Lord Castlereagh from the War and Colonial Departments. With this arrangement Mr. Canning was perfectly satisfied. Again—Mr. Canning's statement shows, that the subsequent proposal of Lord Castlereagh's removal from the Colonial Department was made by Lord Castlereagh's friends, as likely to be more agreeable to Lord Castlereagh himself, than the proposed change in the arrangement of the business of the two departments; and comprehended Lord Castlereagh's appointment to some other high office of state, and his continuance in the Cabinet.

The whole statement of the transaction by both parties is here given without comment, except the few prefatory sentences which are introduced, explanatory of the view and spirit in which it is quoted. The quotation of that whole statement is made, as it is deemed by the author of the Memoir to be due, as well in fairness to Lord Castlereagh's memory, as in justice to that of Mr. Canning;—and as it may serve to set right the misrepresentations which have prevailed, as to the causes and circumstances of the quarrel, and to show that there was nothing either in Mr. Canning's conduct throughout the whole transaction, or in the charges on which Lord Castlereagh founded his demand of satisfaction, which rendered it inconsistent or dishonourable on either side, to be afterwards reconciled as private individuals, or to act together as ministers.

Lord Castlereagh's Letter to Mr. Canning.

"St. James's Square, Sept. 19.

"SIR—It is unnecessary for me to enter into any detailed statement of the circumstances which preceded the recent resignations. It is enough for me, with a view to the immediate object of this letter, to state, that it appears a proposition had been agitated, without any communication with me, for my removal from the War Department; and that you, towards the close of last session, having urged a decision upon this question, with the alternative of your seceding from the Government, procured a positive promise from the Duke of Portland (the execution of which you afterwards considered yourself entitled to enforce), that such removal should be carried into effect. Notwithstanding this promise, by which I consider you pronounced it unfit that I should remain charged with the conduct of the war, and by which my situation as a minister of the Crown was made dependent upon your will and pleasure, you continued to sit in the same Cabinet with me, and to leave me not only in the persuasion that I possessed your confidence and support as a colleague, but you allowed me, in breach of every principle of good faith, both public and private, though thus virtually superseded, to originate and proceed in the execution of a new enterprise of the most arduous and important nature, with your apparent concurrence, and ostensible approbation.

"You were fully aware that, if my situation in the Government had been disclosed to me, I could not have submitted to remain one moment in office, without the entire abandonment of my private honour and public duty. You knew I was deceived, and you continued to deceive me.

"I am aware it may be said, which I am ready to acknowledge, that when you pressed for a decision for my removal, you also pressed for its disclosure, and that it was resisted by the Duke of Portland, and some members of the

Government, supposed to be my friends. But I never can admit that you have a right to make use of such a plea, in justification of an act affecting my honour; nor that the sentiments of others could justify an acquiescence in such a delusion on your part, who had yourself felt and stated its unfairness. Nor can I admit that the head of any administration, or any supposed friends (whatever may be their motives), can authorise or sanction any man in such a course of long and persevering deception. For, were I to admit such a principle, my honour and character would be from that moment in the discretion of persons wholly unauthorised, and known to you to be unauthorised to act for me in such a case. It was, therefore, your act and your conduct which deceived me; and it is impossible for me to acquiesce in being placed in a situation by you, which no man of honour could knowingly submit to, nor patiently suffer himself to be betrayed into, without forfeiting that character.

"I have no right, as a public man, to resent your demanding, upon public grounds, my removal from the particular office I have held, or even from the administration, as a condition of your continuing a member of the government. But I have a distinct right to expect that a proposition, justifiable in itself, shall not be executed in an unjustifiable manner, and at the expense of my honour and reputation. And I consider that you were bound, at least, to avail yourself of the same alternative, namely, your own resignation, to take you out of the predicament of practising such a deceit towards me, which you did exercise in demanding a decision for my removal.

"Under these circumstances, I must require that satisfaction from you, to which I feel myself entitled to lay claim.

"I am, &c.

"CASTLEREAGH."

"The Right Hon. George Canning."

To this letter Mr. Canning instantly replied.

"Gloucester Lodge, Sept. 20.

"My Lord—The tone and purport of your lordship's letter, which I have this moment received, of course precludes any other answer, on my part, to the misapprehensions and misrepresentations with which it abounds, than that I will cheerfully give your lordship the satisfaction which you require.

"I am, &c.

"GEORGE CANNING."

"Lord Viscount Castlereagh, &c."

After some ineffectual efforts to arrange the differences by explanation, at six o'clock on the morning of the 21st of September the parties met, near the Telegraph, Putney Heath. Lord Castlereagh was attended by Lord Yarmouth (now Marquis of Hertford), and Mr. Canning by Mr. Charles Ellis (now Lord Seaford). After taking their ground, they fired by signal, and missed. After the first fire, the seconds endeavoured to bring about an accommodation, but, having failed, they both declared, that after a second shot, whatever might be the result, they would not be parties to any further hostile proceedings. After the second fire, they of course immediately interfered; they then found that Mr. Canning was wounded in the thigh. Mr. Canning was conveyed to his house, Gloucester Lodge, at Brompton, where he was for some time confined. The wound which he received was slight, and he recovered sufficiently to attend the Levee on the 11th of October, and resign the Seals of the Foreign Office. Lord Castlereagh resigned the Seals of the War Department at the same time.

In ordinary cases a meeting, such as is here described, would have been considered as a final adjustment of the quarrel; but in the present instance, the high rank of the parties, seemed to deny them that exemption from public criticism which usually forbears from observing upon the disputes of individuals. The erroneous assertions of various

anonymous writers produced the following authentic statement;—to this statement the readers of this Memoir are referred—and, conformably to the pledge which has been given above, the author will not make a single remark beyond the observations with which he has already deemed it necessary to preface the introduction of this delicate and painful topic.

Detail of the original cause of the animosity between Lord Castlereagh and Mr. Canning, written by Mr. Cooke, the private secretary of Lord Castlereagh.

"It is undoubtedly true, that Mr. Canning, during the Easter recess, did make a representation, in a letter to the Duke of Portland, with respect to the War Department, founded upon differences which had prevailed between him and Lord Castlereagh; but it is not true that this letter was shown to the Cabinet, or that the subject was even stated to the Cabinet, however it might have been secretly communicated to some of the members. It is also true, that a suggestion was made for appointing the Marquis Wellesley to succeed Lord Castlereagh. It is likewise undeniable that a decision upon this point was postponed till near the close of the session. It is further ascertained, that towards the close of the session, when Lord Grenville Leveson Gower's writ was to be moved for, on account of his coming into office and the Cabinet, that Mr. Canning called upon the Duke of Portland, as a condition of his remaining in the Government, to give him a decision upon the proposition for removing Lord Castlereagh, and appointing the Marquis Wellesley his successor; and the Duke of Portland having given Mr. Canning a specific and positive promise to this effect, Mr. Canning pressed that it should be immediately acted upon, and Lord Castlereagh acquainted with it. Lord Castlereagh, however, was not acquainted with it, and Mr. Canning acquiesced in its being concealed from him.

"Undoubtedly Lord Camden was acquainted with the transactions; but it is not true that his lordship ever undertook to make the disclosure to Lord Castlereagh, nor did he ever make it. It is also true that Mr. Canning was thoroughly apprised that it was not made known to Lord Castlereagh. And it is

further true that Lord Castlereagh, being kept in profound ignorance of the decision for his removal from office, was permitted, though in fact virtually no longer a minister, and in this state of delusion, to continue to conduct the entire arrangement of the campaign, and to engage in a new expedition of the most extensive, complicated, and important nature, under the full persuasion, not that Mr. Canning had supplanted him in office, and possessed in his pocket a promise for his dismissal, but that he really enjoyed (as during the period he, in outward show and daily occurrence, experienced) Mr. Canning's sincere, liberal, and *bonâ fide* support, as a co-operating and approving colleague. It is further known, that Mr. Canning, having thus in his pocket Lord Castlereagh's dismissal, and having arranged with the Duke of Portland that it should be carried into execution at the termination of the expedition, did, on the 3rd of September, the day that the account arrived from Lord Chatham that he could not proceed to Antwerp, write to the Duke of Portland, demanding the execution of the promise made to him. What were all the difficulties which were started from time to time against the immediate execution of this promise it would be extremely difficult to detail: but there cannot be a doubt but the question of the writership, which it has been attempted to connect with this transaction, could have nothing to do with it; as Mr. Canning never contended for Lord Castlereagh's removal from the Government, but from the particular office he held, and into which he wished to introduce Lord Wellesley. It appears that the demand of the fulfilment of the promise led to the resignation of the Duke of Portland, and subsequently of Mr. Canning. And it further appears, that as soon as the whole of this unparalleled conduct was, at this late period, disclosed to Lord Castlereagh, he immediately placed his resignation in His Majesty's hands.—On the truth of the above facts the public may rely; and they can no longer be at a loss for the real causes and grounds of the demand made by Lord Castlereagh for satisfaction from Mr. Canning."

Mr. Canning's Answer to Lord Castlereagh's Statement.

"It is perfectly true, that so long ago as Easter, Mr. Canning had represented to the Duke of Portland the insufficiency (in

his opinion) of the Government, as then constituted, to carry on the affairs of the country, under all the difficulties of the times; and had requested that, unless some change should be effected in it, he might be permitted to resign his office.—It is equally true, that, in the course of the discussion which arose out of this representation, it was proposed to Mr. Canning, and accepted by him, as the condition of his consenting to retain the Seals of the Foreign Office, that a change should be made in the War Department.

"But it is not true that the time at which that change was ultimately proposed to be made was of Mr. Canning's choice; and it is not true that he was party or consenting to the concealment of that intended change from Lord Castlereagh.

"With respect to the concealment, Mr. Canning, some short time previous to the date of Lord Castlereagh's letter, without the smallest suspicion of the existence of any intention, on the part of Lord Castlereagh, to make such an appeal to Mr. Canning as this letter contains, but upon information that some misapprehension did exist as to Mr. Canning's supposed concurrence in the reserve which had been practised towards Lord Castlereagh, transmitted to one of Lord Castlereagh's most intimate friends, to be communicated whenever he might think proper, the copy of a letter addressed by Mr. Canning to the Duke of Portland, in the month of July, in which Mr. Canning requests, 'in justice to himself, that it may be remembered, whenever hereafter this concealment shall be alleged (as he doubts not that it will) against him, as an act of injustice towards Lord Castlereagh, that it did not originate in his suggestion; that, so far from desiring it, he conceived, however erroneously, Lord Camden to be the sure channel of communication to Lord Castlereagh; and that up to a very late period he believed such communication to have been actually made.'

"The copy of this letter, and of the Duke of Portland's answer to it, 'acknowledging Mr. Canning's repeated remonstrances against the concealment,' are still in the possession of Lord Castlereagh's friend.

"The communication to Lord Camden, to which this letter refers, was made on the 28th of April, with Mr. Canning's

knowledge, and at his particular desire. Lord Camden being the near connexion and most confidential friend of Lord Castlereagh, it never occurred to Mr. Canning, nor was it credible to him, till he received the most positive asseverations of the fact, that Lord Camden had kept back such a communication from Lord Castlereagh.

"With respect to the period at which the change in the War Department was to take place, Mr. Canning was induced, in the first instance, to consent to its postponement till the rising of Parliament, partly by the representations made to himself of the inconveniencies of any change in the middle of a session, but principally from a consideration of the particular circumstances under which Lord Castlereagh stood in the House of Commons after Easter; circumstances which would have given to his removal at that period of the session, a character which it was certainly no part of Mr. Canning's wish that it should bear.

"Mr. Canning, however, received the most positive promise that a change in the War Department should take place immediately upon the close of the session. When that time arrived, the earnest and repeated entreaties of most of Lord Castlereagh's friends in the Cabinet were employed to prevail on Mr. Canning to consent to the postponement of the arrangement.

"At length, and most reluctantly, he did give his consent to its being postponed to the period proposed by Lord Castlereagh's friends, viz. the termination of the expedition then in preparation; but did so, upon the most distinct and solemn assurances, that, whatever might be the issue of the expedition, the change should take place at that period; that the Seals of the War Department should then be offered to Lord Wellesley (the person for whose accession to the Cabinet Mr. Canning was known to be most anxious); and that the interval should be diligently employed, by Lord Castlereagh's friends, in preparing Lord Castlereagh's mind to acquiesce in such an arrangement.

"It was, therefore, matter of astonishment to Mr. Canning, when, at the issue of the expedition, he reminded the Duke of Portland, that the time was now come for his grace's writing to Lord Wellesley, to find that, so far from the interval having been employed by Lord Castlereagh's friends in preparing Lord Castlereagh for the change, the same reserve had been continued to

wards him, against which Mr. Canning had before so earnestly remonstrated. Being informed of this circumstance by the Duke of Portland, and learning, at the same time, from his grace, that there were other difficulties attending the promised arrangement, of which Mr. Canning had not before been apprised; and that the Duke of Portland had himself come to a determination to retire from office, Mr. Canning instantly, and before any step whatever had been taken towards carrying the promised arrangement into effect, withdrew his claim, and requested the Duke of Portland to tender his (Mr. Canning's) resignation, at the same time with his grace's, to the king. This was on Wednesday, the 6th of September, previously to the Levee of that day.

"All question of the performance of the promise made to Mr. Canning being thus at an end, the reserve which Lord Castlereagh's friends had hitherto so perseveringly practised towards Lord Castlereagh appears to have been laid aside. Lord Castlereagh was now made acquainted with the nature of the arrangement which had been intended to have been proposed to him.

"What may have been the reasons which prevented Lord Castlereagh's friends from fulfilling the assurances given to Mr. Canning, that Lord Castlereagh's mind should be prepared, by their communication, for the arrangement intended to be carried into effect; and what the motives for the disclosure to Lord Castlereagh, after that arrangement had ceased to be in contemplation, it is not for Mr. Canning to explain."

Lord Camden's Statement.

"As it may be inferred, from a statement which has appeared in the public papers, that Lord Camden withheld from Lord Castlereagh a communication which he had been desired to make to him, it is necessary that it should be understood, that however Mr. Canning might have conceived the communication alluded to, to have been made to Lord Camden, it was never stated to Lord Camden that the communication was made at the desire of Mr. Canning; and that, so far from Lord Camden having been authorised to make the communication to Lord Castlereagh, he was absolutely restricted from so doing.

"As it may also be inferred, that Lord Camden was expected to prepare Lord Castlereagh's mind for any proposed change, it is necessary that it should be understood, that Lord Camden never engaged to communicate to Lord Castlereagh any circumstances respecting it, before the termination of the expedition."

Upon Lord Camden's statement being made public, Mr. Canning addressed that nobleman in the following letters:

Letters from the Right Honourable George Canning, to Earl Camden, Lord President of the Council.

"Gloucester Lodge, Nov. 14, 1809.

"My Lord—I had written to your lordship, immediately after the publication of your lordship's statement, but I delayed sending my letter, in the hope of being able previously to submit it to the perusal of the Duke of Portland.

"In this hope I have been disappointed, by that fatal event which has deprived this country of one of its most upright and disinterested patriots; the King, of one of his most faithful, devoted, and affectionate subjects; and the world, of one of the most blameless and most noble minded of men.

"Thus situated, I have thought it right to revise what I had written, and scrupulously to expunge every reference to the authority of the Duke of Portland, which would now stand upon my sole testimony; retaining such only as are supported, either by written documents, which I shall be happy to communicate to your lordship; or by facts which are well known to your lordship or your colleagues, and in which, for the most part, your lordship is yourself concerned.

"Neither, however, can I content myself with this precaution; but must protest, at the same time, in the most earnest manner, against any possible misconstruction, by which any thing in the following letter can be strained to a meaning unfavourable to the motives which actuated the Duke of Portland's conduct.

"It is impossible, indeed, not to regret the policy, however well intentioned, which dictated the reserve practised towards

Lord Castlereagh in the beginning of this transaction; or that practised towards myself in its conclusion.

"It is to be regretted that the Duke of Portland should have imposed, and that your lordship should have accepted, the condition of silence, in the first communications between you.

"It is also to be regretted, that I should not have learnt in July that your lordship was not party to the assurances then given me, on behalf of Lord Castlereagh's friends in general; and that another member of the Cabinet, comprehended in that description, had (as I have since heard) refused to concur in them.

"Had I been made acquainted with these circumstances, I should then have resigned; and my resignation would, at that time, have taken place without inconvenience or embarrassment; and without stirring those questions (no way connected with the cause of my retirement), or subjecting me to those misinterpretations of my conduct and motives, which have been produced by the coincidence of my resignation with that of the Duke of Portland.

"But however this reserve may be to be regretted, it is impossible to attribute the adoption of it, on the part of the Duke of Portland, to any other motives than to that gentleness of nature which eminently distinguished him; and which led him to endeavour (above all things) to prevent political differences from growing into personal dissension; and to aim at executing whatever arrangement might be expedient for improving or strengthening the administration, with the concurrence (if possible) of all its existing members.

"And no man who knows the affectionate respect and attachment, which the manly and generous qualities of the Duke of Portland's mind were calculated to command, and which I invariably bore to him, will suspect me of being willing to establish my own vindication at the expense of the slightest disrespect to his memory or prejudice to his fame.

"I have the honour to be,

"My Lord,

"Your Lordship's most obedient humble servant,

"GEORGE CANNING."

To Earl Camden, &c. &c.

"My Lord—The statement which has been published in the newspapers, in your lordship's name, has decided a question on which I had before been hesitating, as to the necessity of an authentic detail of the transactions (so far as I am concerned in them, or am acquainted with them) to which that statement refers.

"For that purpose, I think, a direct address to your lordship more decorous, both towards your lordship and for myself, than an anonymous paragraph in a newspaper.

"It is with the most painful reluctance that I recur to a subject which, so far as it concerns Lord Castlereagh and myself, had been settled in a manner which is usually, I believe, considered as final.

"Discussions of the cause of dispute more commonly precede than follow the extreme appeal to which Lord Castlereagh resorted. And when, after mature consideration, his lordship had determined to resort to that appeal in the first instance, I should have thought that such a choice, deliberately made, would have been felt by his friends to be equally conclusive upon them as upon himself.

"But your lordship needs not to be informed how assiduously my character has been assailed by writers in the newspapers espousing Lord Castlereagh's quarrel, and supposed (I trust, most injuriously) to be his lordship's particular friends.

"The perversions and misrepresentations of anonymous writers, however, would not have extorted from me any reply. But to them succeeded the publication of Lord Castlereagh's letter to me of the 19th September.

"I entirely disbelieve that Lord Castlereagh, and I distinctly deny that I myself, had any knowledge of this publication.

"But, by what means it matters not, the letter is before the world: and though the course originally chosen by Lord Castlereagh precluded me from offering any explanation to him, the course which has since been adopted on his behalf (though undoubtedly without his privity) might perhaps have been considered as rendering such an explanation due to myself. It is,

however, only since your lordship's publication that I have felt it to be indispensably necessary.

"The statement on my behalf, which has also found its way (without my consent and against my wish) into the public papers, was written under a sense of delicacy and restraint, as to the particulars of the transaction, which, from the character of the transaction itself, must always continue to prevail in a great degree; but from which, until Wednesday, the 11th of October, the day on which I gave up the seals, I had not an opportunity of soliciting any dispensation.

"Of the indulgence which I then most humbly solicited I trust I shall be able to avail myself sufficiently for my own vindication, without losing sight of those considerations of duty and propriety by which the use of such an indulgence must necessarily be regulated and confined.

"It is stated in Lord Castlereagh's letter, 'That I had demanded and procured from the Duke of Portland, before the rising of Parliament, a promise for Lord Castlereagh's removal from the War Department; that, by this promise, Lord Castlereagh's situation, as a Minister of the Crown, was made dependent upon my pleasure; and that this promise I afterwards thought myself entitled to enforce:

"That, after, and notwithstanding this virtual supercession of Lord Castlereagh in his office, I allowed him to originate and conduct the expedition to the Scheldt;

"And that, during this whole period, I knew that the agitation, and the decision of the question for his removal, were concealed from him; and was party to this concealment.'

Lord Castlereagh indeed admits,

"That he 'has no right as a public man, to resent my demanding, upon public grounds, his removal from his office, or even from the Administration, as a condition of my continuing a member of the Government.'

"But he contends, that a proposition, 'justifiable in itself,' ought not to have been 'executed in an unjustifiable manner;' and he makes me responsible for the manner in which the 'head of the administration,' and some members of the Government, 'supposed to be his (Lord Castlereagh's) friends,' executed the proposition which he attributes to me.

'He is ready to acknowledge, indeed, 'that I pressed for a disclosure, at the same time that I pressed for a decision; and that the disclosure was resisted by the Duke of Portland and his (Lord Castlereagh's) *supposed* friends.'

'But in this circumstance Lord Castlereagh professes not to see any justification of what he conceives to have been my conduct towards him; because, by acquiescing in the advice or entreaties of his 'supposed friends,' I admitted 'an authority' on their part, 'which I must have known them not to possess;' because, by 'pressing for disclosure,' I showed my own sense of the 'unfairness' of concealment; and because, with that sense, I 'ought (as he conceives me not to have done) to have availed myself of the same alternative, namely, my own resignation, to enforce disclosure, which I did to enforce decision.'

'Without offering a single word in the way of argument, I shall, by a distinct detail of facts, in order of their date, substantiate my contradiction of these charges.

'I shall only premise,

'1st, That I had (as is admitted by Lord Castlereagh) an unquestionable right to require, on public grounds, a change in the War Department, tendering at the same time the alternative of my own resignation.

"2dly, (What no man at all acquainted with the course of public business will dispute,) That the regular, effectual, and straightforward course for bringing that alternative to issue, was to state it directly to the 'head of the administration,' the 'King's Chief Minister, to be laid by that Minister before the King.

'I proceed to the detail of facts.

'In the beginning of April (the 2d) I addressed a letter to the Duke of Portland, containing a representation on the state of his administration, and expressing my wish and intention, unless some change were effected in it, to resign.

'April 4th to 8th.—Upon the Duke of Portland's requiring a more detailed explanation as to the motives of my proffered resignation, I stated, among other things, that a change, either in my own department, or in Lord Castlereagh's, appeared to me to be expedient for the public service. I stated my perfect willingness that the alternative should be decided for my retirement; and only requested that the decision might (if possible)

take place before the recommencement of business in Parliament after the Easter holidays.

"The Duke of Portland requested me to suspend the execution of my intention to resign; wishing to have an opportunity of consulting with some of his colleagues, before he determined what advice to lay before the King.

"The Easter holidays thus passed away. On the 16th of April, shortly after his grace's return to town from Bulstrode, the Duke of Portland opened the subject to one of the members of the Cabinet, whose name (not having been hitherto brought forward) I do not think it necessary to mention. Your lordship is perfectly acquainted with it.

"By the Duke of Portland's desire, I had a communication with that member of the Cabinet, within a very few days after his interview with the Duke of Portland. He strongly represented the difficulty of making any new arrangement during the sitting of Parliament; and urged me to defer the pressing my own resignation till the end of the Session. To this recommendation I did not promise to accede; but we agreed (whether upon his suggestion or upon mine I am not confident) that, at all events, no step whatever could properly be taken, until after the decision of the question upon the writership, which was, about this time, brought forward in the House of Commons.

"That question was decided on Tuesday, the 25th of April.

"On Friday, the 28th, the Duke of Portland communicated fully with your Lordship; and informed me, as the result of that communication, that your Lordship thought a change in Lord Castlereagh's situation in the Government desirable, provided it could be effected honourably for Lord Castlereagh, and that it could be reconciled to Lord Castlereagh's feelings.

"From this period I understood that your lordship was constantly consulted by the Duke of Portland in every step of the transaction. Other members of the Cabinet were also consulted by the Duke of Portland; but how many of them, or at what precise periods, I neither knew at the time, nor can now undertake to say.

"Shortly after your lordship's first interview with the Duke of Portland (I am sure before the 5th of May), that member of the Cabinet, with whom his grace had first communicated, re-

ported to me a suggestion of your lordship's, of a change of office for Lord Castlereagh, evidently calculated on the principles which your lordship had stated as indispensable to such a change. Whether this communication to me was in the nature of a direct message from your lordship, I do not exactly know. But I understood distinctly that you knew of its being made to me; and that whatever observations I might make upon it were to be reported to your lordship. What I observed upon it was, in substance, that it was not for me to presume to say what change would be proper; that I had done all that I had thought myself either called upon or at liberty to do, in stating to the Duke of Portland my opinions, and my intention to resign; that the Duke of Portland alone could either propose any change, or obtain the necessary authority for carrying it into effect; and I therefore recommended that your lordship should state your suggestion to the Duke of Portland.

"On the 5th of May, the Duke of Portland informed me, that he had determined to lay the whole subject, on the following Wednesday, before His Majesty.

"On Wednesday, the 10th of May, he informed me that he had done so; and that His Majesty had been graciously pleased to say, that he would take the subject into his serious consideration.

"On Wednesday, the 31st of May, apprehending it to be possible that my intention might not have been fully explained to His Majesty, and thinking it my duty to leave no doubt upon it, I humbly repeated to His Majesty the representations which I had before made to the Duke of Portland, and humbly tendered my resignation. I received thereupon His Majesty's gracious commands to retain my situation until His Majesty should have considered the whole subject.

"Some time in the course of the next week, I think on the 8th of June, the Duke of Portland stated to me, that he had received His Majesty's commands to propose, and to carry into effect, at the end of the session of Parliament, an arrangement for a partial change in the War Department.

"The particulars of this arrangement I do not think it proper to detail; feeling it my duty to limit myself strictly to what is absolutely necessary for the explanation of my own conduct. It

is sufficient to state, that the object of this arrangement was not the removal of Lord Castlereagh, but a new distribution of the business of the War Department, whereby that part of it which was connected with political correspondence would have been transferred to the Foreign Office; and the business of another office, then vacant, would have been transferred to Lord Castlereagh. It is only necessary to add, that the effect of this new distribution would not have been to take out of Lord Castlereagh's hands the superintendence of the expedition to the Scheldt.

"On the 13th of June, I wrote to the Duke of Portland, signifying to him that, although such an arrangement had never entered into my contemplation, and although I did not think it calculated to remedy all the difficulties which had induced me to bring the state of the administration under his grace's consideration, I was ready, so far as I was concerned, to undertake and discharge, to the best of my ability, any duty which His Majesty might be graciously pleased to devolve upon me; but I expressed, at the same time, great doubts, whether this arrangement could be expected to be acceptable to Lord Castlereagh, or, in all parts, satisfactory to the public feeling.

"On Sunday, the 18th of June (Parliament being expected to rise on the 20th or 21st), I wrote to the Duke of Portland, to inquire whether this arrangement, or any other, was to take place; stating to him that, 'if things remained as they then were, I was determined not to remain in office.'

"June 18th.—In answer, the Duke of Portland mentioned to me a new plan of arrangement, altogether different from that which he had been authorised to carry into effect; and stated that he had sent for your lordship, and the other member of the Cabinet with whom your lordship and the Duke of Portland had been in constant communication, to co-operate with him in forwarding this new plan, and to urge Lord Castlereagh to consent to it.

"The particulars of this new plan I do not think it necessary to state, as I learnt from the Duke of Portland, either the next day, or the day following it, that to this plan Lord Castlereagh certainly could not be brought to agree. Whether this was known to his grace only from your lordship, or through your lordship from Lord Castlereagh himself, I was not apprised.

"On Wednesday, the 21st, the day of the rising of Parliament, I was assured by the Duke of Portland, that the specific arrangement which he had in the first instance proposed, viz. the new distribution of the business of the War Department, should be carried into effect; and that His Majesty had directed him to desire your lordship to communicate his decision to Lord Castlereagh.

"On Tuesday, June the 27th, finding that no communication had been yet made to Lord Castlereagh, I wrote to the Duke of Portland in terms of the strongest remonstrance, both against the concealment and the delay; and intimated my determination to recur to my original intention, and to press the acceptance of my resignation.

"Accordingly, on the following day, Wednesday, the 28th of June, I had an audience of the King, in which I humbly and earnestly repeated to His Majesty the tender of my resignation.

"That same evening, the Duke of Portland informed me that he had that day signified to your lordship the King's desire, that your lordship should communicate the intended arrangement to Lord Castlereagh; and that the communication was to be made by your lordship as soon as the expedition had sailed; which, it was expected, would be in less than a fortnight from that time.

"But before this fortnight elapsed, viz. on Wednesday, the 5th of July, the Duke of Portland informed me that, in consideration of the difficulties attending the proposed arrangement, he and those with whom he consulted were of opinion that another should be substituted for it, which, he trusted, would also be more agreeable to me. He told me that hopes were entertained that your lordship would determine to offer your resignation, for the purpose of facilitating a general arrangement, in which a complete change in the War Department might be effected consistently with Lord Castlereagh's feelings. He said, however, that your lordship had not yet finally made up your mind upon the subject; but that you would probably come to a decision before the following Wednesday.

"The Duke of Portland stated his intention, in the event of your lordship's resignation, to submit to His Majesty the nomination of Lord Wellesley to the War Department.

"It was well known by the Duke of Portland that I had been always anxious for Lord Wellesley's accession to the Cabinet;

but this was the first mention to me, in the course of this transaction, of his introduction into the War Department.—But for a severe indisposition, Lord Wellesley would, before this time, have been on his way to Spain.

"On Thursday, the 13th of July, the Duke of Portland informed me that your lordship had, the day before, actually tendered your resignation; but that your lordship had annexed to it the conditions, that no change should take place till after the termination of the expedition to the Scheldt; and that it should be left to your lordship to choose the time of making any communication to Lord Castlereagh.

"July 13th to 20th.—I made the strongest remonstrance against this new delay, and this indefinite renewal of the concealment from Lord Castlereagh. I said, that after the repeated postponements which had already taken place, and after the reserve which had already been practised towards Lord Castlereagh, I could not rely upon the execution of any arrangement which should not be now completely settled in all its parts; and, if this were not to be done, I most earnestly entreated that His Majesty might be advised now to accept my resignation.

"The Duke of Portland most anxiously deprecated my resignation, as leading, in his apprehension, to the dissolution of the administration. He declared himself to be authorised to assure me, in the most solemn manner, that the arrangement now in contemplation should positively take place at the termination of the expedition; that the Seals of the War Department should then be offered to Lord Wellesley, an office (to be vacated by means of your lordship's retirement) being at the same time to be offered to Lord Castlereagh; and that, in the interval, and without loss of time, Lord Castlereagh's friends should take opportunities of preparing him for the change, and reconciling him to it, by representing to him the great advantages to be derived from it, in the acquisition of additional strength to the Government.

"Not only the Duke of Portland, but other members of the Cabinet, Lord Castlereagh's friends, some directly and some through common friends, urged me, in the most earnest manner, to acquiesce in the postponement now proposed. It was represented to me that if, instead of pressing for the execution of the

arrangement now, time were allowed to Lord Castlereagh's friends to prepare him for the change, and to reconcile him to it, the arrangement might ultimately take place in an amicable manner; that every public object might thus be answered, without any unnecessary harshness to the feelings of individuals; and that, so far from finding fresh impediments raised to the execution of the arrangement, when the time arrived, I should find all those, to whose representations I yielded, considering themselves pledged equally with the Duke of Portland, to see it carried into effect.

"It is due to your lordship to say, that your lordship's name was not, so far as I recollect, specifically mentioned to me on this occasion; but it is equally due to myself to declare, that I never for a moment imagined, nor could have believed, that the general description of 'Lord Castlereagh's friends,' as stated to me without exception or qualification by the Duke of Portland, did not comprehend your lordship, whose proffered resignation was the basis of the whole arrangement, and without whose express consent, therefore, no other person could announce the arrangement to Lord Castlereagh.

"By these representations and assurances, at length (July 20th), most reluctantly, and, I confess, against my better judgment, I was induced to acquiesce in the proposed postponement of the change; and consented to remain in office till the termination of the expedition.

"On Saturday, September the 2d, the result of the expedition to the Scheldt being then known, I wrote to the Duke of Portland, at Bulstrode, reminding his grace, that the period fixed for offering the Seals of the War Department to Lord Wellesley was arrived.

"On the following Wednesday, the 6th of September, the Duke of Portland informed me, that no steps whatever had been taken by any of Lord Castlereagh's friends to reconcile him to the change, or to prepare him for it; that the execution of the arrangement would be attended with other resignations, or at least with one other resignation (of which I had never before received the slightest intimation); and that he had himself determined to retire.

"Upon receiving this intelligence, I immediately disclaimed

any wish that the arrangement, however positively I understood it to have been settled, should be carried into effect under circumstances to me so unexpected; and instantly reverted to that 'alternative' which, upon each successive stage of difficulties and delays, I had uniformly pressed—that of the tender of my own resignation; which I desired the Duke of Portland to lay that day before the King.

"On the following day, Thursday, the 7th of September, I declined attending the Cabinet; stating, in a letter to the Duke of Portland (which I left it to his grace to communicate to the Cabinet if he should think proper), that I considered my resignation as in His Majesty's hands, and myself as holding my office only until my successor should be named.

"On Friday, the 8th, I heard from the Duke of Portland that Lord Castlereagh had sent in his resignation. I have been informed since (but whether correctly or not I cannot affirm) that he did so in consequence of a communication made to him, by your lordship, after the Cabinet of the preceding day.

"On Thursday, the 14th of September, your lordship called upon me at the Foreign Office, by your own appointment, for the purpose of explaining the causes which had prevented your making any communication to Lord Castlereagh in the earlier stages of the transaction.

"On Tuesday, September the 19th, your lordship, in answer to a letter of mine of the preceding day, explained to me the grounds of your silence to Lord Castlereagh, during the latter period of the transaction.

"On Wednesday morning, September the 20th, I received from Lord Castlereagh the letter which produced our meeting.

"From this series of facts it appears,

"That, in April, I made a representation to the King's First Minister, on the general state of the administration; and that, in the course of the discussions arising out of that representation, I proposed, on public grounds, not, as Lord Castlereagh appears to have been informed, his removal from the administration, but the alternative of a change, either in the War or Foreign Departments.

"That, on the 10th of May, the Duke of Portland submitted to His Majesty the subject of my representation; and informed

me that His Majesty would be pleased to take it into his consideration:

"That, from the 10th of May until the 8th of June, I was wholly unapprised of the result of that consideration; but that, for fear of misapprehension, I had, in person, during that interval, viz. on May 31st, humbly repeated my representation, and tendered my resignation to His Majesty:

"That, on or about the 8th of June, for the first time, an arrangement was stated to me, which had for its object a new distribution of the business of the War Department; and that, on the 13th, I signified my acquiescence in that arrangement, so far as I was concerned:

"That, on the 18th, another arrangement was stated to me, to be substituted for that in which I had acquiesced: but that, on the 21st, it was announced to me that the first arrangement was finally decided upon; was to be immediately carried into effect; and was to be communicated to Lord Castlereagh by your lordship:

"That, on the 27th of June, no step appearing to have been taken, either to execute the intended arrangement, or to apprise Lord Castlereagh of it, I remonstrated against the delay; and against the concealment from Lord Castlereagh: and that, on the 28th, I again tendered my resignation; and that on the same day your lordship received an injunction to communicate the intended arrangement to Lord Castlereagh:

"That, on the 5th of July, a new plan was stated to me to be in contemplation; a plan originating with your lordship, and depending for its execution upon a step to be taken by yourself: that this plan was, on the 13th, announced to me as settled, and as intended to be substituted for that which had been first proposed:

"That I at that time renewed my remonstrances, in the strongest manner, both against the delay and against the concealment; but that it was stated to me to be an indispensable condition of this plan, on your lordship's part, that it should not be acted upon till the termination of the expedition to the Scheldt; and that the time of making the communication to Lord Castlereagh should be left to your lordship's discretion:

"That, at length, in compliance with the representations and

entreaties of the Duke of Portland, and of others, Lord Castlereagh's friends, and upon the most solemn assurances that Lord Castlereagh should in the mean time be prepared by his friends for the change; and that the change should positively take place at the period fixed by your lordship, I consented to remain in office:

"That, on Wednesday, the 6th of September, finding that nothing had been done towards preparing Lord Castlereagh for the arrangement; and that the execution of it would be attended with difficulties of which I had not before been apprised, I desired the Duke of Portland to lay my resignation before the King.

"Your lordship will therefore perceive,

"That, up to the 8th of June, so far from being in possession of any 'promise of Lord Castlereagh's removal,' and from his continuance in office being made thereby dependent upon my pleasure;—no decision whatever had, to my knowledge, been taken, up to that time; no proposal had been made to me by the Duke of Portland, in any way affecting Lord Castlereagh's political situation; and no intimation had been given to me, whether my own resignation would be finally accepted or declined:

"That the arrangement which was in contemplation from the 8th of June to the 5th of July, in no degree affected, and was never intended to affect, 'the conduct of the expedition to the Scheldt:'

"That Lord Castlereagh's 'removal from the War Department' was first determined upon as part of the plan of which your lordship's resignation was the basis:

"That his 'removal from the administration' was not at any time 'demanded by me:'

"And, lastly, That I *did* employ the tender of my own resignation, not to 'enforce decision' *only* (as Lord Castlereagh's letter supposes), but equally to 'enforce disclosure;' and that in fact I did ultimately resign, rather than 'enforce' the intended change, under circumstances so different from those which I had been authorised to expect.

"It cannot be expected that I should labour very anxiously

to refute the charge of my having '*supposed*' your lordship and others '*to be*' Lord Castlereagh's *friends*;' and having, under that impression, deferred to your opinion and authority,' in a matter affecting Lord Castlereagh's interests and feelings.

"That your lordship, in particular, as well from near connexion as from an active and anxious partiality, was entitled to consultation and to deference, on such an occasion, is a persuasion which I felt in common, as I believe, with every member of the Government; and which not even Lord Castlereagh's disclaimer has induced me to renounce.

"I should not have been surprised, nor should I have thought myself entitled to take the smallest offence, if your lordship had, instead of concurring in the expediency of a change in Lord Castlereagh's department, protested against it, and had recommended to the Duke of Portland to advise the King to accept my resignation: and it was perfectly known by the Duke of Portland, and, I am confident, not unknown by your lordship, that, at any moment, from the beginning of these discussions to the end, I was not only ready but desirous to terminate them by resigning.

"But when the opinion of the expediency of a change in the War Department had been adopted by so many of the immediate friends of Lord Castlereagh, upon the condition that it should be reconciled to Lord Castlereagh's feelings, and when they, and your lordship among the first, had devised and concerted with the King's First Minister the mode of carrying that object into execution, I cannot help thinking that I should have been much, and justly, blamed, if I had insisted upon taking the communication to Lord Castlereagh out of your hands into my own.

"I now come to your lordship's statement.

"This statement appears to me to have been much misunderstood. It has been construed, as if your lordship had meant to aver that what you were *restricted from doing*, and what you *had not engaged to do*, were one and the same thing: whereas your lordship's statement, in point of fact, contains two distinct propositions, and refers to two separate periods of time.

"The period during which your lordship states yourself to

have been '*absolutely restricted*' from making a communication to Lord Castlereagh, extends from the 28th of April, on which day the first communication was made by the Duke of Portland to your lordship, to the time at which the proposed arrangement, for the new distribution of the business of the War Department, was superseded by your lordship's tender of your resignation.

"The period during which your lordship states yourself '*not to have engaged*' to make a communication to Lord Castlereagh, extends from the time of the tender of your lordship's resignation to the termination of the expedition to the Scheldt.

"It ought, however, to be observed, that during the first of these two periods—from the 28th of April to the 12th of July—the nature of the communication to be made to Lord Castlereagh, and the nature of the restriction imposed upon your lordship, were entirely changed.

"*Previously* to the 8th of June, the communication which your lordship would have had to make to Lord Castlereagh was, simply that I had represented the expediency of a change either in his department or in mine: and that no decision whatever had yet been taken upon this representation.

"With respect to *this* communication, it does not appear that the restriction upon your lordship was absolute and indefinite. But I knew nothing of its existence.

"*Subsequently* to the 8th of June, the communication, to be made to Lord Castlereagh was, that an arrangement was in contemplation for a new distribution of the business of the War Department.

"With respect to *this* communication, not only was the *restriction* upon your lordship not indefinitely continued; but your lordship actually received, on the 28th of June, an *injunction to make this communication* to Lord Castlereagh at a period distinctly specified, viz. the sailing of the expedition. And this injunction was only superseded by a voluntary act of your lordship's—your tender of your own resignation on the 12th of July, as the basis of another arrangement.

"During the whole of the period, from the 28th of April, to the 12th of July, the concealment practised towards Lord Castlereagh was either without my knowledge, and contrary to my belief, or it was against my earnest remonstrances.

"It was without my knowledge, and contrary to my belief, up to the week in which Parliament rose; and from that time forth it was against my earnest remonstrances.

"Even when I learnt, in June, that the communication had not been made by your lordship to Lord Castlereagh, I did not learn that you had been prevented from making it by any absolute restriction.

"It was not till the month of July, in the course of the discussions which took place from the 13th to the 20th of that month, respecting the proposal for postponing the new arrangement to be founded on your lordship's resignation, and for leaving to your lordship's discretion the time of disclosure to Lord Castlereagh, that I learnt that the silence which you had hitherto observed towards him had been imposed upon your lordship by the injunction of the Duke of Portland. I did not till then know with whom the concealment hitherto practised had originated; I frankly own that I thought it had originated with your lordship; I was anxious above all things that it should not be even suspected that it had originated with me; or that I had been a consenting party to it, or even (till a late period) conscious of its existence.

"In my correspondence with the Duke of Portland at this period, therefore, at the same time that I resisted the new delay then proposed, I disclaimed any concurrence in the concealment which had been hitherto practised—and requested 'that it might be remembered hereafter, whenever that concealment should be alleged against *me*, as an act of injustice to Lord Castlereagh, that it did not originate in *my* suggestion; that, so far from desiring it, I had conceived (however erroneously) *your lordship* to be the sure channel of communication to Lord Castlereagh; and that up to a very late period I had believed such communication to have been actually made.'

"The Duke of Portland, in answer, acknowledged my repeated remonstrances against the concealment; stating himself at the same time not to have been aware that I had at any time believed the communication to have been actually made; but assuring me 'that he should be at all times ready to avow that the concealment had originated with himself (the Duke of Portland); that he had *enjoined it* to all those with whom he had communicated, from motives which he was at all times ready to justify;

and that he was desirous of taking whatever blame might have been, or might at any time be, incurred by it, upon himself.

"This, as I have said, was my first knowledge of any restriction whatever upon your lordship's communication to Lord Castlereagh.

"If I am asked *why* I believed your lordship to have *actually made* the communication, I answer, because it was natural that you should make it; because the expectation of your making it was the motive which induced me to desire (and I *did* desire) that the communication should be made to your lordship; because the manner in which you first received that communication (as reported to me by the Duke of Portland) tended to confirm the belief that your lordship was the fit channel of communication to Lord Castlereagh; and because I knew not of the existence of any impediment to your pursuing what appeared to me (and does still appear to me) the natural and obvious course to be pursued upon such an occasion.

"It may be objected, that I ought not to have been contented with *presuming* the disclosure to have been made, but ought to have diligently ascertained that it was so. First, I answer, that no person naturally sets about ascertaining that of which he entertains no doubt; and, secondly, I answer, that the moment that my suspicion of the fact was excited, I did set about ascertaining the truth; and that, upon ascertaining it, I did remonstrate in the strongest manner against the concealment; and enforced that remonstrance by the tender of my own resignation.

"It was on the 26th or 27th of June (five or six days after Parliament rose) that I discovered my suspicions to be well founded.—On the 27th I remonstrated.—On the 28th I tendered my resignation.—And in the course of the same day, your lordship (as I have already stated) received an injunction to make the communication as soon as the expedition should have sailed.

"The second of the two periods to which your lordship's statement refers, begins from the 12th of July, the day of the tender of your lordship's resignation.

"It does not appear, nor does your lordship's statement aver, that at any time during the second period, the restriction which had been originally imposed upon your lordship was renewed; or that any other existed, except that which your lordship had

imposed upon yourself, and which was therefore no longer binding upon your lordship than while you might yourself be willing that it should bind you.

"Of the extent to which this *self-imposed* restriction appears to have gone, I had not any suspicion. I knew indeed that your lordship had stipulated to keep the time of the disclosure to Lord Castlereagh in your own hands; but, subsequently to my being made acquainted with that stipulation, I had received the assurances which I have already described, on behalf of 'Lord Castlereagh's friends;' and had relied upon those assurances.

"It was not till the 6th of September that I learnt that those assurances had not been carried into effect. It was not till the 19th of September that I learnt that your lordship had been no party to them. Then indeed I learnt that your lordship had not only '*not engaged*' to make the communication previously to the 'issue of the expedition being known here'—but that in July you had 'stated to *one* of our colleagues' (not the Duke of Portland), '*who was urging an earlier communication*,' that the 'time of communication, so far as you were concerned, was for you to decide; but that no one had a right to say you did not perform that part in the transaction in which you were concerned, *if you did not open your lips to Lord Castlereagh before the issue of the expedition was known here.*'

"This information I received from your lordship, in a letter dated the 19th of September. It was then perfectly new to me.

"I leave your lordship to judge what must have been my surprise, when, after receiving from your lordship, on the evening of the 19th of September, this frank avowal of the real origin of the concealment maintained, during this latter and most important period, towards Lord Castlereagh, I received on the following morning Lord Castlereagh's letter of the same date, making *me* responsible for that concealment.

"I have not to trouble your lordship with any farther observations.

"I have confined myself to matters growing out of Lord Castlereagh's letter, and out of your lordship's statement: on those alone have I any right to claim your lordship's attention.

"To this address to your lordship I have been compelled to resort, however reluctantly, to vindicate my private honour.

As to any charges against my public conduct, this is not the mode to reply to them. If any such shall be brought against me, at the proper time, and in the proper place, I shall be prepared to meet and to repel them.

"I have the honour to be, &c.

"GEORGE CANNING."

The resignations of Lord Castlereagh and Mr. Canning, together with that of the Duke of Portland (which his grace's infirm state of health, for a long time past, had now rendered absolutely necessary), induced the remaining portion of His Majesty's Ministers to make overtures to Lord Grenville and Earl Grey. The proposal having received His Majesty's approbation, a correspondence took place on this important subject. It was opened by a letter from Mr. Percival to each of these noblemen, dated Windsor, September 23rd, 1809. In this letter it was stated, that in consequence of the intended retirement of the Duke of Portland, and the resignations of Lord Castlereagh and Mr. Canning, he (Mr. Percival) and Lord Liverpool were authorised to concert measures with Lords Grey and Grenville for forming an extended and combined administration. He therefore requested these noblemen to come to town immediately, in order that this object might be accomplished. Lord Grey replied to the letter addressed to him, in a letter, dated Howick, September 26th, expressing, in respectful terms, his zeal for His Majesty's service, and his readiness to go to town, at a moment's notice, had His Majesty's commands been personal to himself; but, at the same time, declining to do so on the present occasion, as it was impossible for him, consistently with his regard to public duty, to enter into any terms with the existing administration. Lord Grenville repaired to town, and, on his arrival, wrote to Mr. Percival an answer to his communication, similar in substance to that of Lord Grey; at the same time that he declined to enter into a treaty with the existing administration, he declared that, in doing so, he was actuated by no feeling of per-

sonal animosity, and that it was not more his duty, than his desire, to study to allay political animosities; but, as his objections applied to the principle of the Government itself, and not to the persons of ministers, he considered such an accommodation as leading to a dereliction of public duty. Mr. Percival, in a letter, dated the 29th, replied to Lord Grenville. He expressed his regret at the failure of the object in contemplation, and reminded his lordship, that, in making the proposal, he had not stated that he wished for the accession of Lords Grey and Grenville, but for their concurrence in forming a combined and extended administration.

It is clear, that nothing but a very urgent necessity could have induced the remaining ministers to make these overtures; and when their advances were thus rejected, great hopes were entertained by the adverse party, that they would not be able to keep their ground. The principal hope of the ministry now rested upon the Marquis Wellesley. It was thought at first that he would not join any administration in which Mr. Canning was not included;—this opinion, however, proved erroneous. The noble Marquis accepted the office which Mr. Canning vacated;—the Earl of Liverpool was transferred from the Home to the War Department, in place of Lord Castlereagh;—and the situation which he had vacated, was filled by Mr. Ryder. Mr. Percival took the place of the Duke of Portland, thus uniting in himself, as Mr. Pitt and Mr. Addington had done before him, the offices of First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer. The secession of Mr. Canning was greatly regretted, as was also that of Mr. Huskisson, who resigned the Secretaryship of the Treasury about the same time.

Although Mr. Canning resigned his place as a member of the administration, he did not enter into active opposition to the existing Government. He steadfastly adhered to the principles by which his political conduct had hitherto been regulated respecting the policy of England, in vigorously

prosecuting the mighty struggle in which she had been engaged with France. In the year after his resignation of office, public attention was principally engaged by the discussion in Parliament of the Regency Resolutions, in which Mr. Canning took a very active part. The mental disorder, under which His Majesty had suffered about twenty years before, returned upon him. In this distressing state of mind, it was, of course, impossible for His Majesty to appoint Commissioners to meet Parliament on the first day of November, 1810, and to prorogue it, agreeably to the proclamation which had been issued, to a future day. When, therefore, Parliament assembled on that day, there was no power to prorogue it; and, on the other hand, the King not being present, and no commission being sent for opening the Parliament, they could not proceed to business. The physicians expressed a decided opinion, not only that His Majesty was at that time totally incapable of performing the high functions of the regal office, but that his recovery would probably be slow and remote, and that it went beyond their skill and foresight to fix the period when that happy event would take place. It was, therefore, absolutely necessary for ministers to proceed towards the appointment of a Regent, as the Houses of Lords and Commons, the session not having been opened in the usual form, by a Speech from the Throne, or by Commissioners named by His Majesty, could not constitutionally be regarded as the Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, but merely as a convention of the estates.

The business originated in the House of Commons, where, on the 20th of December, the House having resolved itself into a Committee on the State of the Nation, Mr. Perceval moved the three resolutions, with which the speeches of Mr. Canning, on this question, are prefaced. Parliament finally proceeded by bill, rather than address, to invest the Prince with the Regency; under certain restrictions, of which Mr. Percival sketched the plan; and a Committee of each House was appointed to wait upon the Prince of Wales, for the

purpose of receiving his formal acceptance of the Regency. His Royal Highness, at the same time that he signified his acceptance, lamented that the restrictions which would be imposed upon him, under the pretence of their being necessary to secure the resumption of the Royal authority in all its power and splendour, deprived him of the opportunity of manifesting to his beloved parent, and to the nation at large, that his duty and affection for the one, and his regard for the interests of the other, would not have permitted any wish or idea to have entered his mind, of doing any act which would have restored a diminished power into the hands of his father.

It was in the course of the ensuing session, 1811, that Mr. Canning made his celebrated speech on the Bullion Committee; this speech is one of the most powerful and masterly specimens on record of chaste and reasoning eloquence. That part of it which is intended to prove the depreciation of the Bank of England notes—a position broadly and pertinaciously denied at the time—by men of the highest public stations, is, at once, forcible, perspicuous, and unanswerable. The very able report of the Bullion Committee, which gave birth to this famous speech, is replete with lucid statement and powerful reasoning; but it wants the ease and grace and polish of this great master of eloquence. On no subject is it so difficult to bring to bear those captivating characteristics which distinguish minds of the highest attainments, as on this dry, and to many, this revolting matter of the currency. Mr. Canning appeared to feel this; but it was a common remark amongst those of his friends, who had the advantage of familiar access to him in private, that no man so promptly, and with so much effect, directed the powers of his mind to any new subject foreign to his pursuits. On the present occasion, he must have been stimulated to extraordinary exertion, by the remembrance that this was that province of his great master, Mr. Pitt, whence all his influence as a minister had been derived, and upon which his distinction as a statesman mainly rests. No man

has manifested more zeal to do honour to the memory of his illustrious teacher than Mr. Canning; and what occasion could be so tempting as one when the state of the currency of this great country was under legislative revision—when the aptitude of the pupil to solve the most difficult problems might be exhibited? If we admit, as in all sincerity we must, that the ambition of displaying in Parliament powers to deal wisely with the intricate and perplexing subjects of currency and finance, was a ruling motive on this remarkable occasion, it is admitting no other motive than one which all the admirers of Mr. Pitt will duly appreciate. No man could be ambitious of occupying, as a principal minister of the British Crown, any of the highest offices of the state, without desiring to be acquainted with subjects so intimately blended with the most complicated and ramified system of finance, which was ever known in the world. Hence, perhaps, the origin of this elaborate display of financial talent. It was unusual with Mr. Canning to make any great effort in this department of Parliamentary subjects. But having determined upon making the effort, this was assuredly one altogether worthy of a man, who resolved to be distinguished purely as a British minister eminently acquainted with British interests. Whether Mr. Canning displayed superior wisdom in arriving at conclusions on this important subject, which differed, it may be presumed, in many respects from such as his great master would have approved, is a matter of controversy which cannot be entirely settled till generations shall have passed away, and time and experience have shed the clear light of truth on one of the most difficult and abstruse subjects which can occupy the mind.

It is a remarkable circumstance, and shows how great an effect may be produced by devoting a powerful mind to a subject with which it is not familiar, that this speech of Mr. Canning contains all that has ever been urged in Parliament by speakers who take the side of the bullionists on this question—stated in the best manner—and recommended by

all the captivating attractions of beautiful language, polished style, and copious and cogent illustration.

The latter speech on Mr. Vansittart's resolutions was one of those happy efforts of sarcastic power, whose caustic influence Mr. Canning, especially in the early and middle stages of his political life, was wont to apply to obstinate perversity in men of high station.

The report of the physicians in attendance on the King, that His Majesty's complete and final recovery was very improbable, led to the removal of the restrictions imposed on the Prince as Regent; and various additions to the civil list, for the support of the separate establishment of His Royal Highness, were recommended to Parliament, and carried into effect. About this time (the early part of the session of 1812) the Marquis of Wellesley seceded from the administration. The grounds of his lordship's secession were, that "in his judgment, the administration ought to be formed on an intermediary principle, between instant concession and eternal exclusion, with respect to the Catholics; and that the war should be carried on with adequate vigour."

Before his place in the Cabinet was filled up, the administration and the country received a shock in the assassination of Mr. Percival, in the lobby of the House of Commons, on the 11th of May, 1812, by a person of the name of Bellingham. This wretched man had encountered some losses in a private commercial speculation, for which he applied to Government to indemnify him. The application, of course, could not be favourably entertained, and in revenge for this supposed neglect of his claims, he marked out the Prime Minister for assassination. On the death of Mr. Percival, the administration was thrown into great embarrassment by being thus suddenly bereft of its chief. As no immediate steps were taken on Mr. Percival's death, to construct a new ministry, Mr. S. Wortley submitted, and carried by a majority of four, a motion for an Address to the Prince Regent, praying His Royal Highness to form an efficient administration. The

answer of His Royal Highness was, that he would take the Address into his serious and immediate consideration. Shortly afterwards, the Prince Regent was pleased to lay his commands on Lord Wellesley and Mr. Canning to form an administration. Their negociation to form an administration failed, partly in consequence of the Whig party considering the share in the administration, offered to them by Lord Wellesley and Mr. Canning, inadequate to their pretensions; and partly, from Lord Liverpool, and all the other members of Mr. Percival's Cabinet, declining to entertain Lord Wellesley's proposal. The commands of the Prince were next communicated to Lord Moira, to form an administration, including Lords Grey and Grenville. This negociation, also terminated in failure, principally on the ground of the Prince being unwilling to relinquish the nomination to some appointments in the great offices of the Royal household, which have usually been included in the political arrangements made on a change of administration. Lord Moira declined to concur in making the exercise of this power by the new ministers positive and indispensable, because he deemed it objectionable on public grounds.*

The task of forming an administration was now intrusted to Lord Liverpool. That noble lord proposed to Mr. Canning to become a member of the administration. The offer was accompanied with an intimation that he was at liberty to retain, and to express, his well-known sentiments on the Catholic Question; and in Lord Liverpool's proposal to Mr. Canning, was also included an offer to Lord Wellesley of the Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland. The office which Mr. Canning formerly held—that of Secretary for Foreign Af-

* Mr. Moore, in his "Life of Sheridan," states, that Mr. Sheridan concealed from Lords Grey and Grenville a communication made to him by Lord Yarmouth, of the Royal intention that he (Lord Yarmouth) and the other great officers of the household should resign. This disclosure, if it had been made by Sheridan, would, most probably, have led to the formation of an administration by Lord Moira.—EDITOR.

fairs—was now filled by Lord Castlereagh, who was to hold, together with it, what is well understood by the term, *the lead* in the House of Commons. So great was the desire of the new administration to secure the support and aid of Mr. Canning's talents in the Cabinet, that a proffer was made to him of the Foreign Department; and, in the event of his accepting it, Lord Castlereagh (between whom and Mr. Canning a cordial reconciliation had been previously effected) authorised Lord Liverpool to communicate to Mr. Canning his readiness to accede to an arrangement, the object of which was to accept, for himself, the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, and to transfer to Mr. Canning the Seals of the Foreign Office. Mr. Canning might very fairly, at this time, have thought that his own pretensions to be the leading minister of the House of Commons, were at least equal to those of Lord Castlereagh, who had not then filled that situation; but this point, which certainly came into discussion, was but a subordinate, and by no means an insurmountable one, in forming his decision not to accept office:—the principal reason that induced Mr. Canning, after having failed to form an administration in conjunction with Lord Wellesley, to decline belonging to Lord Liverpool's Government, was because it *then* professed to oppose, as a Government, the removal of the Roman Catholic disabilities. Highly creditable to Mr. Canning's consistency, and to the sincerity of his anxiety to carry the Catholic Question, as his declining office at this time unquestionably was, the admirers of this great man cannot now abstain from regretting—what, indeed, during his own lifetime, he was fully conscious of—that by declining office in 1812, he lost one of the most glorious opportunities that ever presented itself to a minister of England—the opportunity of presiding over the foreign relations of this country, during that period in which all those important and momentous events occurred, which crowded into the few years that followed these negociations, the revolutions and changes of an age.

In this year (1812), the House of Commons was engaged in the discussion of the renewal of the East India Company's Charter. The conduct of Mr. Canning on this important question, strongly recommended him to the merchants of Liverpool. Indeed, to all classes of the community, an opposition to the continued monopoly of the East India Company was of the utmost importance. The capital of our merchants was consuming itself idly and unprofitably in immense stocks of goods, for which they could find no purchasers; our labouring manufacturers were, in many places, reduced almost to a state of starvation; and as a natural and unavoidable consequence, our taxes had diminished in their produce, while the nation at large felt the consequences of this stagnation of trade in the increase of the poor rates. Under such circumstances, it was not to be wondered at, that the distressed manufacturers looked forward to the East Indian market with great confidence, as one which would not only for the present take off their accumulated produce, but also permanently supply a regular and large demand for their goods; and that they strenuously opposed the renewal of the Charter of the East India Company. Although Mr. Canning took a very prominent part in the Select Committee of the House of Commons, in discussing and arranging the plan of the new Charter, there is no record of a full declaration of his sentiments upon it in Parliament. He spoke briefly in support of the resolutions moved by Lord Castlereagh. His services to the public interests, on this occasion, were chiefly rendered out of Parliament; in communications with the parties most interested and conversant on the subject; and in a close attendance in the Committee, which went into an examination of evidence at great length. He approved of the plan of proffering such a renewed Charter to the Company as would at once secure to them part of their exclusive privileges, and give them time and opportunity to prepare themselves for the loss of the whole; for though he contended against the monopoly, he was not so rash and unad-

vised a speculatist as to maintain that a monopoly, which had existed so long, and which of course had incorporated itself so intimately with many parts of our political and commercial system, and on the continuance of which so many persons depended for the necessary or comfortable means of subsistence, should be at once entirely destroyed. A gradual preparation was necessary for those who were interested in its continuance, as well as for those who hoped to reap benefit from its destruction. Although the principle of free trade was asserted in the renewal of the Charter, yet the limitations, under which it was renewed by Parliament, preserved to the Company the principal part of the power which it had previously possessed. Under them the sovereignty of India was continued to the Company. The influence of the Crown, however, received some increase respecting the nomination of Governors-General. But if, in regard to political power, the Company obtained nearly all that they could demand, the same favour was not shown to their pretensions still to monopolise the commerce of India. The trade, however, was opened to competition only in those branches from which the Company always declared that no profits, but a sensible loss, accrued to them; and which, therefore, they had no other motive than public spirit for continuing to carry on. It was, therefore, obvious that their financial condition would be improved by the transferrence of these branches to other hands. The trade to China, by which the Company still gained considerably, was preserved to them.

At the close of the session of 1812, Parliament was dissolved; and at the general election which ensued, Mr. Canning was invited to become a candidate for the representation of Liverpool. The manner of the invitation—the success which crowned him in the first arduous contest, in which the pride of victory was enhanced by being obtained over so formidable an opponent as Mr. Brougham—and the connexion which he at this time formed with Liverpool, and which continued for many years to be a source of reciprocal

pride and honour to the constituent body and their representative, Mr. Canning ever afterwards regarded as the most glorious events in his whole public life. He was sensible of the political weight which the distinction of being returned for so important a commercial town as Liverpool would impart to his opinions in Parliament. The circumstances of his return were additionally agreeable to him, from the fact of their being, in every respect, precisely similar to those under which Mr. Burke was invited to become a candidate for the representation of Bristol. The celebrity of his talents, and the desire of giving due effect to those talents, by arming them with the authority derived from the confidence of a large and enlightened commercial community, induced the freemen of Liverpool to call on Mr. Canning, as the same motives formerly prompted the freemen of Bristol to select Mr. Burke as their representative. Mr. Canning, like Mr. Burke, was "unaccredited by patrician patronage;" like Mr. Burke, too, he had to produce "his passport" for high offices of trust at every step of his political elevation. The claims of both were the legitimate claims of character—of public principle—and of honourable service. They were not "swaddled and dandled into legislators" from their birth, but vindicated their fitness for the station to which they were chosen, by the knowledge which they evinced of the constitution and commerce of the empire—by sparing no study to understand—and no endeavour to support them. Well and truly was Mr. Canning entitled to exclaim, in the spirit of a just and noble exultation—"If to depend directly upon the people, as their representative in Parliament; if, as a servant of the Crown, to lean on no other support than that of public confidence; if that be to be an adventurer, I plead guilty to the charge; and I would not exchange that situation, to whatever taunts it may expose me, for all the advantages which might be derived from an ancestry of a hundred generations."

Although Mr. Canning was not publicly invited to stand for Liverpool until the general election of 1812, his return

for that town was meditated by some active and independent citizens of that borough so early as 1809.

Encouraged by the general manifestation of this sentiment at Liverpool, Mr. Turner addressed a letter to Mr. Canning, soliciting him to become a candidate for the representation of Liverpool, and assuring him of a disposition on the part of the freemen to support him, in the event of his consenting to be put in nomination.

When Mr. Canning received this letter, the House of Commons was busily employed in the investigation of the charges brought by Colonel Wardle against His Royal Highness the late Duke of York; Mr. Canning wrote the following answer:—

Mr. Canning's Answer.

"April 2, 1810.

"Sir—The incessant occupation of the House of Commons, since I had the honour to receive your letter of Wednesday last, will, I hope, excuse me to you for not having acknowledged it sooner.

"I beg you to believe that I am duly sensible of the kind and flattering manner in which you have had the goodness to express yourself towards me; and that no man can estimate more highly than I do, the value of the object which you so obligingly hold out to me.

"At the same time, you will not think it extraordinary that, to a question so unexpected, and involving so many considerations, both of a public and personal nature, I should not be prepared at once to give a precise and positive answer. In or out of office, it would always be a great gratification to me to have reason to believe that my conduct had recommended me to the good opinion of the town of Liverpool. If the trust of representing it in Parliament were to be delegated to me, I should accept it with pride, and, I hope, discharge it with fidelity.

"But, on the other hand, unconnected as I am with Li-

verpool, or any of its inhabitants, I should not presume to offer myself to their choice.

"And I ought to add, that my private circumstances put wholly out of the question my incurring the hazard of any such expense, as a contest for Liverpool would probably occasion.

"I have the honour to be,

"Sir,

"Your obliged and most obedient humble servant,

"GEORGE CANNING.

"P.S. I write from the country: but my address is London."

In a narrative of the circumstances, attendant on Mr. Canning's connexion with Liverpool (communicated to the Editor of this work by Mr. Turner), that gentleman states, "that, after the receipt of this letter, he suffered no opportunity to escape of introducing Mr. Canning's name as a future candidate for Liverpool, and that he communicated the letter of Mr. Canning to Mr. Drinkwater, an eminent merchant at Liverpool, who commenced a correspondence with Mr. Canning, quoting the letter to Mr. Turner as an introduction."

Mr. Turner adds, "that when the dissolution in 1812 took place, the hopes and fears of the admirers of Mr. Canning were wound up to the highest pitch;—the opposition had already brought forward two candidates, Messrs. Brougham and Creevey, with a confidence that never dreamt of defeat. The first movement made to oppose their claims, was at a conference held in the house of a private gentleman, where about six gentlemen met to deliberate upon what measures to pursue at such a crisis. One of these gentlemen mentioned that Mr. Canning had been talked of, but upon what foundation he could not tell, for all he could learn was, that Mr. Drinkwater was in possession of a letter from Mr. Canning, and suggested it would be advisable to send for him for further information. He was accordingly sent

for, and he soon satisfied them, that if Mr. Canning was invited, and properly supported, he would accept their invitation with pride and pleasure. It was thereupon determined to call a meeting of the friends of the Right Honourable Gentleman, at the Golden Lion, on the following day, the 25th September; and the call appeared to have had an electrical effect. The meeting was more numerous and respectable than upon any former occasion on record. A committee was immediately nominated to conduct the election, and the friends of Mr. Canning entered into the most liberal subscriptions to give efficacy to their resolutions. Never was any Liverpool election carried on with such energy and spirit."

The following is a Copy of the Letter forwarded to Mr. Canning by this Meeting.

"Liverpool, October 1, 1812.

"Sir—Entertaining, as we do, the highest respect for, and the fullest confidence in, your talents, integrity, and public conduct, we feel a strong and anxious desire that this loyal and ancient borough should possess the high advantage of being represented by you in Parliament; and we, therefore, do most earnestly invite you to offer yourself as a candidate at the ensuing election.

"Should you favour us by your compliance, we beg to assure you of our utmost zeal and exertions in your behalf; and, from the knowledge we possess of the very favourable sentiments generally entertained of you by the freemen and other inhabitants of this large and populous borough, we cannot permit ourselves for a moment to doubt your being returned to Parliament by a large majority, notwithstanding any opposition that is or may be contemplated by others on the occasion.

"With the greatest respect,

"We have the honour to be, Sir,

"Your faithful and obedient servants,

"**** ****."

To this Mr. Canning replied:

"Mamhead House, near Exeter,
"Sunday, October 4, 1812

"GENTLEMEN—In returning from a more distant part of the country, upon intelligence of the dissolution of Parliament, I am met here, this day, by your flattering invitation to Liverpool.

"I have not words to express my sense of the honour thus tendered to me. It is one which, unconnected as I am with the town of Liverpool, I certainly should never have presumed to think of soliciting; nor can I forbear, even now, entreating you to reflect, whether any advantage or satisfaction which you can hope to derive from choosing me one of your representatives can compensate the trouble which (I am led to apprehend) you may have to encounter in accomplishing that object.

"Having said this, if it be, nevertheless, your pleasure to call me to that distinguished situation, my services are at your command; I put myself into your hands; relying confidently upon the exertions which you will employ to give effect to your own wishes, and to vindicate your choice, by making it triumphantly successful.

"Had I presumed, uninvited, to solicit your suffrages, it would have been incumbent upon me to address to you some profession of my public principles, and some exposition of my public conduct.

"As it is, you allow me to flatter myself that to your indulgent and favourable construction of those principles and that conduct (by which alone I am known to you) I am indebted for the invitation which I have this day received from you.

"I am not likely to swerve from principles which have procured to me so signal and gratifying a distinction.

"My conduct in Parliament will always be governed by the best judgment which I am able to form of what is con-

ducive to the welfare or essential to the honour of the country.

"I have only to add, that gratitude, as well as duty, will insure my unwearied attention to every thing that may affect the peculiar interests of the town of Liverpool, or which can contribute to its prosperity.

"I have the honour to be,

"With the highest respect and acknowledgment,

"Gentlemen,

"Your most obliged and faithful servant,

"GEORGE CANNING."

The history of Mr. Canning's connexion with Liverpool, consists of a series of successive and increasing triumphs. He stood four times as a candidate for the representation of that town, and was each time elected, always with opposition, but with an opposition that progressively diminished at the recurrence of each contest. On the first occasion he had four antagonists, and his majority over the opponent nearest to him on the poll* was 500. The second election took place after Mr. Canning's appointment to the Presidentship of the Board of Control in 1816; he was returned, after a struggle of three days, by the retirement of his opponent, Mr. Leyland, whose name, indeed, had been set up by the hostile party, in spite of his personal declaration that he was desirous not to serve. At the fourth election, in 1820, there was scarcely the shadow of an opposition, but the third election, that of 1818, was distinguished by some curious electioneering manœuvres. At the close of the fourth day's poll, it having been found that the freemen could not be polled with rapidity, a bar for a nominal candidate was opened, and Arthur Heywood, Esq. stood on behalf of Lord Sefton. Mr. Canning met this, by opening a bar, in the name of Mr. Bolton, for his party. Immediately after the nomination of Mr. Bolton, Colonel Williams appeared for Lord Sefton; and nine bars were opened, and subsequently

* Mr. Brougham.

twenty-one. These extraordinary circumstances are referred to, and commented on, in a vein of classic pleasantry, in Mr. Canning's speech on the fourth day of the election.

"Gentlemen, you have all read, no doubt, the letters of Lord Chesterfield. It is upon the authority of that polite writer, I think, that it has been laid down as a maxim, that, for the perfect enjoyment of social comfort, a company ought not to be less numerous than the Graces, nor more numerous than the Muses. Gentlemen, your candidates, when we set out, were equal in number to the Graces only; and, so long as that analogy was preserved, we went on most courteously together. On Saturday that analogy was abandoned by the addition of two candidates. Disorder immediately ensued: but we had no sooner reached the hustings this morning, than an attempt was made to repair it, by raising our number to nine. Bars were actually opened for candidates equal in number to the Muses; but not, that I could see, with any increase of harmony from that association.

"Gentlemen, having tried that mystical number for one round (just time enough to induce Lord Sefton's friends to inscribe 'HARMONY AND SEFTON' on their flag), it was found, that the Muses were any thing but a security for harmony. The harmony which followed the adoption of their number was, indeed, of that species for which certain concerts (called, I know not how justly, after our neighbours the Dutch) are celebrated, where every man is said to play his own tune upon his own instrument!

"Unluckily, the effort to escape from this confusion was not so well considered as it was, no doubt, well intended. By adding to the number nine, nine more, and three more to that, till, by regular progression, we rose to the number that I have stated, twenty-one—I cannot help thinking, that we rather augmented than diminished the complication of our affairs.

"The list, however, of twenty-one, which I hold in my hand, but which the excessive state of pressure in which I

see you, prevents me from reading to you, contains many names of individuals which you would hear with kindness and respect.—[*Cries of 'Read, read!'*] But, then, gentlemen, there are others of a different description.—[*Cries of 'Read, read!'*] No, gentlemen. The concert which I have described is, happily, terminated; and, as many of the performers were advertised without their own consent, and were never persuaded to take a vocal part in it, I should do unfairly in bringing their names before you for criticism and comparison.

"But, gentlemen, I say, seriously and sincerely, it was a great satisfaction to me to find, that, in case of real necessity, there were so many men in this town, of the principles which you approve, who could have been brought forward to put down any combination against your interests and freedom. Among these names, as I told you on Saturday, my respected host (who now stands near me) was one; and, as I then announced to you this fact, and the motive of his allowing himself to be put in nomination, I owe it to him to say, that, that motive having ceased, he has lost no time in relinquishing his short trial of public life; and, giving up all claim to your suffrages, has gladly withdrawn again into that privacy which he loves, and which, you all know, he adorns.

"Gentlemen, I was for some time at a loss to conceive what could possibly have put it into the head of that venerable magistrate, Colonel Williams (for he it was who started this extraordinary arithmetical progression to-day, by presenting himself as a candidate)—I was at a loss, I say, to conceive, what could have suggested it to his imagination, that, amongst all the things that were wanting in this contest, and on his own side, candidates were the materials in which they were most deficient! From all I had before heard, I had reason to suppose, that of candidates they had enough, and that voters were principally wanting. But, it seems, it was reserved for this sagacious politician not only to discover where the want really pinched, but who

was the fittest person to supply it. My difficulty, however, was, in a great measure, solved, when I recollected the worthy colonel's passion for Parliamentary Reform. The fashions of London travel down to the country, and are sometimes mistaken and disfigured in rural imitation. I am persuaded, that, something in this way, Colonel Williams having learned, from Major Cartwright, that *universal suffrage* was the one thing necessary in politics, has only made a small mistake in the application of that doctrine, and has conceived the major to intend, not that every man should vote, but that every man should be a candidate! Under such a conception (however misapprehended), nothing could be more praiseworthy than Colonel Williams's tender of his services. Of this plan of reform it may, at least, be said, that, as it is the newest, so it is the most simple and most innocent that Colonel Williams could possibly pursue.

"The expedient, however, having been tried, we have all, by common consent, grown weary of it; and, after having indulged a little of that ill-humour which will break out in the best regulated controversies, we have found, happily not too late, that we had better return towards the point from which we set out. We have so returned; not, indeed, precisely to the original number of the Graces, but to that number with the ornamental addition only of Mr. Heywood, as a sort of master of ceremonies. You have now again three real candidates offering themselves to your choice; and Mr. Heywood is so good as to stand by to see fair play."

Liverpool naturally gloried in the honour of possessing a representative, whose talents were the "pride of the senate," and whose principles were those by which the most stupendous tyranny, that ever bestrode the world, was struck down. On every occasion on which he visited Liverpool, the most flattering marks of attention were paid to him. Public dinners, aquatic excursions, and costly entertainments were given to welcome him—a club was instituted in honour of

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him, entitled "The Canning Club." This friendly intercourse between Mr. Canning and the important commercial community which he represented, subsisted without interruption from the commencement of his connexion with them, in 1812, until its close in 1822. On his expected departure from England, to assume the Government of India, in the latter year, a valuable piece of plate was presented to him by his constituents; and a deputation from the associated commercial bodies of the port waited on and presented him the subjoined address, expressive of the high sense they entertained of the services which he had rendered to them, during the period that he had been their representative in Parliament. The address was read by Mr. Irlam, as chairman of the oldest association (the West India) in Liverpool.

"*To the Right Honourable George Canning.*

"Sir,—Having been deputed, by the associated commercial bodies of Liverpool, to convey to you their respectful acknowledgments for the various and important services, rendered by you to this town, whilst you have been its representative in Parliament, we have much pleasure and satisfaction in expressing the deep sense they entertain of the obligation you have imposed upon them, by your constant and zealous attention to their interests; by the kindness and impartiality with which all the applications for your assistance have been received; and by the prompt exertion of your splendid talents in the promotion of every object, in which the character and prosperity of this great commercial community have been involved.

"We, therefore, beg to tender you their most grateful and hearty thanks, accompanied by their best wishes for your future health and happiness."

This address was signed by the chairman and deputy chairman of each of the mercantile associations of Liverpool, by whose unanimous votes it was sanctioned and approved. After the death of Mr. Canning, the inhabitants of Liver-

pool have further testified their respect for his virtues, talents, and services, by a subscription which has been liberally entered into for erecting a monument in honour of his memory.

In the following year, 1813, our arms were crowned with the most brilliant successes. The British army, led on by Lord Wellington, invaded France in the south, whilst the combined armies, after the decisive battle of Leipsic, and the rout of the French, passed the northern frontier. From this double invasion may be dated the downfall of that despotism which, towards the close of the last century, like a portentous meteor, rose in the political hemisphere, and which, bound by no attraction—true to no orbit—disturbed the social system, "affrighted monarchs, and kept the world in awe." The speech of Mr. Canning on Foreign Treaties contains a proud and commanding retrospect of the events of the mighty struggle in which England was long engaged, and an eloquent and exulting congratulation of the House and of the country on the glorious results which proceeded from the *unsubdueable* perseverance and irrepressible spirit of the British people. This was the last speech which Mr. Canning delivered previous to his appointment to the Lisbon embassy. Objections have been made to his acceptance of this embassy, on two grounds. First, on the ground of his having accepted a situation subordinate to Lord Castlereagh, between whom and Mr. Canning the press and the opposition, not very fairly or charitably, evinced an anxiety to perpetuate a struggle for official ascendancy. The second ground of objection, was to the salary and allowances of the Right Hon. Gentleman, which it was contended, were far beyond the requisite expenses of the embassy. Some even went so far as to assert, that the contingent event, viz. the return of the Royal Family of Portugal from the Brazils, for which the embassy was provided, was in reality never contemplated; but that the whole transaction "was a job," instituted to provide a comfortable retreat for Mr. Canning, and to conciliate his support of the existing Government. These charges were ad-

duced in no very qualified terms in a speech by Mr. Lambton, introductory to a motion on this subject. Both speeches are preserved in the present collection. To these speeches the reader is referred, and if Mr. Canning's eloquent and indignant spurning of the unworthy imputations thrown upon him have the same effect upon his mind, that it had upon the audience to which it was addressed, the refutation will indeed be satisfactory, triumphant, and complete. To some, the great majority by which the motion was rejected, may be an equivocal test of the merits of the question; but the powerful and irresistible force of the reasoning, and the conclusive evidence against the main charges of the accusation, which the speech contains—the common and candid sense of every man can perceive and appreciate, even in the absence of an honourable acquittal by the House of Commons.

Mr. Canning had intended to depart for Lisbon several months before there was even a rumour of his visit to that city being connected with political objects. The cause of his departure was the pressure of a severe domestic affliction—the dangerous illness of his eldest son, for saving whose life, a trial of the climate at Lisbon was held out, by his medical attendants, as the only hope of recovery. Mr. Canning had been accused of prolonging his sojourn there beyond the period that there was any notified ground for continuing it. To this accusation he replied, in his speech to his constituents at Liverpool, in 1816:—"The moment that I learnt the Prince Regent of Portugal's determination not to return last year to his European dominions, I resigned. It is false, gentlemen, as (I am told) is asserted, that I continued in a public capacity to the period of my leaving Lisbon. Of the seventeen months, or thereabouts, which I passed in Portugal, the last six months I was as private an individual as any among you; and it was no fault of mine that I was not much sooner superseded: it was in the month of April, last year, that I sent in my resignation. I remained there, according to my original intention, invested with no public character, discharging no public duties, and

receiving, in consequence, no public pay. 'Nor can I imagine how mistake (if mistake be the true name) could have arisen as to my continuing as a public character, unless it were that, being settled in Lisbon, I did continue, long after the expiration of my public character, to receive such of my countrymen, as happened to come recommended to me, with such civility as the means of a private individual could allow.'

The absence of Mr. Canning, at the Court of Lisbon, extends over a period of nearly two years (1814—1816); two years of eventful interest to England and to Europe. The arrangement of continental treaties—the extraordinary escape of Buonaparte from Elba—and the consequent interruption of that peace which the conquerors, who a short time before had triumphantly entered her capital, had given to France in their moderation and magnanimity, and which France had accepted with gratitude. The guilty infraction of the treaty of Paris was quickly followed by the battle of Waterloo, not only the most renowned and glorious victory ever gained in modern or ancient times, but still more memorable for having been attended with more important, extended, and beneficial results to the interests of mankind, than proceeded from any single battle, in which mighty armies have been summoned to conflict, to decide the destinies of nations. One of those results, and the most important of them, was the consummation of that policy which, commencing with the war against the French Republic, in 1793, when Mr. Canning first embarked in public life, accomplished its beneficent objects, and realized the glorious term of its arduous and successful toils on the plains of Waterloo, where the eagle of imperial despotism, "towering in its pride of place," was struck down—and for ever.

Mr. Canning arrived in England early in 1816. He touched at Bourdeaux, on his return from Lisbon, where he stopped for a few days, and where a splendid public entertainment was given to him by the merchants of that city. Shortly after his arrival, a vacancy occurred in the Presidency of the Board of Controul, by the death of the Earl of

Buckinghamshire, to which, on the invitation of the Prince Regent, Mr. Canning succeeded.

Parliament met on the 27th of January, 1817. Previous to the session, numerous public meetings were held in almost all the counties and principal towns throughout England. The resolutions, passed at these meetings, complained of the deep distress which pervaded all classes of the community, and earnestly called upon Parliament to administer the means of relief. Resolutions for reform, and petitions, grounded upon them, were also passed: at some of these meetings, the petitions were couched in respectful, firm, and constitutional language; but, at many others, exciting and vehement speeches were delivered, calculated only to aggravate the pressure of distress, by the additional calamity of disloyalty and discontent. The principle of disaffected combination was inculcated by itinerant orators—the Government was stigmatized as tyrannical, rapacious, and oppressive—and the necessity of an immediate and radical reform in the whole system of Government enforced. It became the duty of the Legislature to direct its attention to the abridgment of the means, possessed by ill-designing persons, of working upon the passions of the people, and of turning to mischievous purposes that susceptibility which distress had created. The evil influence, which was attempted to be exercised over the minds of the people at this period, is thus adverted to in the Speech of the Prince Regent, at the beginning of the session of 1817:—

"In considering our internal situation, you will, I doubt not, feel a just indignation at the attempts which have been made, to take advantage of the distresses of the country, for the purpose of exciting a spirit of sedition and violence. The distresses, consequent upon the termination of a war of such unusual extent and duration, have been felt, with greater or less severity, throughout all the nations of Europe, and have been considerably aggravated by the unfavourable state of the season. Deeply as I lament the pressure of these evils upon the country, I am sensible that

they are of a nature not to admit of an immediate remedy; but, whilst I observe with peculiar satisfaction the fortitude with which so many privations have been borne, and the active benevolence which have been employed to mitigate them, I am persuaded that the great sources of our national prosperity are essentially unimpaired; and I entertain a confident expectation, that the native energy of the country will, at no distant period, surmount all the difficulties in which we are involved."

The spirit of disaffection continued rapidly to diffuse itself throughout the country, to so serious and formidable an extent, that a Message from the Prince Regent was communicated to Parliament on the 3rd of February, accompanied by papers, containing information respecting meetings and combinations in the metropolis and different parts of the country, calculated to endanger the public tranquillity. The result of the consideration of this Message, was the passing of the Habeas Corpus Suspension Bill, and the Seditious Meetings' Bill. In the debates upon these bills, Mr. Canning spoke frequently, and he became, at this time, very unpopular with the opposition party, which considered these extraordinary measures, for preventing the spread of democratical opinions, stronger and more restrictive than the supposed necessity of enacting them. Mr. Canning was regarded as the most prominent minister who supported these bills, which, imposing severe limitations upon personal liberty —however urgent the necessity that may call for their enactment—must ever expect to meet a disgracious reception in a free country. The prominence, ascribed to Mr. Canning on this occasion, was really nothing more than that marked and conspicuous display, with which pre-eminent talent always asserts its ascendancy. He was the ablest minister in the House of Commons, and his advocacy of ministerial measures, naturally attracted the largest share of the admiration of his own party, and of the reprehension of that which was opposed to it. On three occasions, attacks were made upon Mr. Canning, growing out of the dis-

turbances of this year and of the two succeeding years, which were nearly attended by duels in their consequences. The severest of these attacks was put forth in the shape of an anonymous pamphlet. It appeared shortly after his speech on the Indemnity Bill in 1818. It had reference principally to that passage of the speech, which contains an allusion to Ogden's petition. Throughout it is repeated the charge of jesting with the sufferings of the people—

"The lie so oft o'erthrown,
The trash and nonsense not his own."

Upon that much misrepresented passage of Mr. Canning's speech, an explanatory note is introduced in its proper place in a subsequent volume. The pamphlet (the matter of which was confined to this single topic) was supposed to resemble the style of Junius; but the supposition could only be entertained by those who were no very competent critics or appreciators of the polished virulence and classical invective of that "Great Unknown."

The letters of Junius have been erroneously attributed to Sir Philip Francis, and the supposed resemblance of style induced the public to ascribe to him the authorship of this pamphlet. In every thing that regarded his private honour or integrity as a public man, Mr. Canning was sensitive almost to a fault. The notice taken of this pamphlet in the following letter, is a remarkable instance of the prompt and sore excitability of which he was susceptible, whenever an unworthy imputation was cast upon him.

"Gloucester Lodge, April 10th, 1818.

"SIR—I received, early in the last week, the copy of your pamphlet, which you (I take for granted) had the attention to send to me.

"Soon after I was informed, on the authority of your publisher, that you had withdrawn the whole impression from him, with the view (as was supposed) of suppressing the publication.

"I since learn, however, that the pamphlet, though not sold, is circulated under blank covers.

"I learn this from (among others) the gentleman to whom the pamphlet has been industriously attributed, but who has voluntarily and absolutely denied to me that he has any knowledge of it, or of its author.

"To you, Sir, whoever you may be, I address myself thus directly, for the purpose of expressing to you my opinion, that—

"*You are a liar and a slanderer, and want courage only to be an assassin.*

"I have only to add, that no man knows of my writing to you; that I shall maintain the same reserve, so long as I have an expectation of hearing from you in your own name; and that I shall not give up that expectation till to-morrow (Saturday) night.

"The same address, that brought me your pamphlet, will bring any letter safe to my hands.

"I am, Sir,

"Your humble servant,

"GEORGE CANNING."

"For the Author of 'A Letter to the
Right Hon. George Canning.'

"(Mr. Ridgway is requested to forward this letter to its destination.)"

The writer of the pamphlet, prudently deeming the better part of valour to be discretion, acknowledged the letter, but declined the invitation of removing the mask of an anonymous signature, which concealed his real person. It would be no difficult matter (if any more useful purpose than idle curiosity were to be served by it) to disclose the name of the author of the pamphlet that provoked this letter. Suffice it to say, that the author lived to alter his opinions respecting Mr. Canning, and publicly to retract his censure, on more than one occasion, by pronouncing a brilliant eulogy upon the calumniated minister.

On another occasion, in a report of a speech of Mr. Hume, that gentleman was represented as having pronounced a sharp rebuke on Mr. Canning, which induced him to require an explanation from Mr. Hume, through Lord William Bentinck. It appeared, however, the paragraph of the report, of which Mr. Canning complained, was inserted in the newspaper (the Times) by mistake. The gentleman who reported it was summoned to attend at the bar of the House, and, having received a reprimand from the Speaker, was discharged.

A misunderstanding also arose between Sir Francis Burdett and Mr. Canning, which had nigh been attended with an unpleasant result, but which terminated in a satisfactory adjustment to the honour of both parties. The circumstances, in which this misunderstanding originated, are these:—Sir Francis Burdett, whilst in the custody of the Marshal of the King's Bench, for having been convicted of a political libel, addressed a letter, on the 4th of April, to the Chairman of a Reform dinner, containing a reference to Mr. Canning, which ran thus:—

"Gentlemen, that *Mr. Canning*, I mention him as the champion of the party, *a part for the whole*, should defend to the utmost a system, by the hocus pocus tricks of which *he and his family get so much public money*, can cause neither in me, nor any man, suspicion or anger—

> 'For 'tis their duty, all the learned think,
> To espouse the cause *by which they eat and drink*.'

Do I therefore say the House of Commons is corrupt? Not I, indeed, even though I should run no risk of being transported—no such thing; they are true to the interests of those who send them. '*The ox knoweth his owner*, and the *ass his master's crib*,' and they, at least, equal the ox and the ass in knowledge and virtue, and are, moreover, superior to the Jews, for they do know their Maker. I will, however, boldly adduce their example, as proof undeniable,

of benefits the people would derive from appointing their own representatives, seeing that these gentlemen are ever true to their own and their patrons' interest. This identity of interest keeps all smooth, and the public may rest assured that the same cause will ever produce the same effect, and that, whenever the public shall have the appointment of their own House of Commons, the public expenditure will be controlled, the public burthens diminished, the public money applied to public purposes, and the public happiness and prosperity, in other words, 'Liberty and Property' secured, and not till then."

Mr. Canning took no notice of the passage in the letter which gave him offence, as Sir Francis Burdett was then a prisoner; but, immediately on his liberation from prison, he addressed to the Hon. Baronet the following letter. The subjoined correspondence explains the nature of the offence, and the course which the affair took.

"*To Sir Francis Burdett.*

"Gloucester Lodge, June 7, 1821.

"SIR—In a letter bearing your signature, and purporting to have been addressed by you to the Chairman of a Dinner of Parliamentary Reformers, on the 4th of April, which was published in several of the newspapers of the following day, a liberty is taken with my name, as little justifiable (in my judgment) by differences of public opinion, as it is reconcileable with the ordinary courtesies of private life.—The obvious meaning of that passage in your letter of which I complain, is, to impute to me, that in upholding the present system of representation in the House of Commons, *I am actuated by the corrupt and dishonourable motive of a personal pecuniary interest.*—It cannot be matter of surprise to you, that I should feel myself under the necessity of *requiring at your hands a disavowal of the imputation* that passage appears to convey. Should you be unable, or un-

willing, to afford me a satisfactory explanation upon this point, *I have then to demand of you the only other reparation which an injury of such a nature admits.* It can hardly be necessary to state to you, Sir, the reason why this demand has not been sooner made; but I owe it to myself to preclude the possibility of any doubt or misrepresentation as to the causes of that delay. The first and natural impulse of my own feelings, was to address myself to you the instant that I had read your letter in the newspapers. But it was represented to me, by the friend whom I requested to take charge of my letter, that your then situation rendered it impossible for you to accept the second of the alternatives proposed to you (a circumstance which, I must be permitted to observe, considerably aggravated the offence offered to me); that the utmost which I could obtain from you was an engagement to afford me satisfaction, so soon as the term of your confinement should have expired; that the interval must be full of hazard as to secrecy; that, without in any degree impeaching either your honour, or that of any gentleman whom you might select, the mere fact (which could hardly be concealed) of a communication between me, or any friend of mine, and the King's Bench, could not fail to excite suspicion; and that such suspicion would necessarily be strengthened by my prolonging my stay in England till the middle of May, after having repeatedly and publicly announced my intention of waiting only for Mr. Lambton's motion of the 17th of April. Yielding for the time (and I know not how I could have done otherwise) to the force of these representations, it remained for me only to keep my own counsel, and to quicken, as much as possible, my return from the Continent. I arrived here yesterday evening. My first business on my arrival has been to communicate with Lord William Bentinck, who has the goodness to undertake to deliver this letter to you, *and to settle, on my behalf, all necessary arrangements on the matter to which it relates.* I assure you, upon my honour, that Lord William Bentinck

is the only person who has any knowledge of this letter, or of my purpose to write it.

"I have the honour to be,

"Sir,

"Your most obedient Servant,

"GEO. CANNING."

"*To the Right Hon. George Canning.*

"St. James's Place, June 8, 1821.

"SIR—I am not aware of having made any unjustifiable allusion to you, or of having said of you, in my letter to the Chairman of the Reform Meeting, more than *all political men*, who *benefit from the system which they advocate*, are *fairly* and *necessarily* subject to. The letter in question is now before me; and I am at a loss for a form of words in which I could have more guardedly marked the disqualification under which I conceive yourself and others to be, from giving authority to your opinions on Parliamentary Reform, and at the same time have *avoided making any allusion whatever to personal character*. Not having intended, and not having made (as I read the letter), any such allusion at the time, I cannot now hesitate, in a more particular manner, *to disclaim having ever had such an intention*.

"I have the honour to be,

"Sir,

"Your most obedient humble Servant,

"FRANCIS BURDETT."

"*To Sir Francis Burdett.*

"Gloucester Lodge, June 9, 1821.

"SIR—Lord William Bentinck has just delivered to me the answer, which you have transmitted to his lordship, through

Mr. Kinnaird, to the letter which I addressed to you on Thursday. Lord William Bentinck's opinion (with which my own feelings entirely coincide) satisfies me that I can have no other reply to make to your letter, than to express my acknowledgment for the frankness and promptitude with which you have disclaimed any intention of personal offence.

"I have the honour to be,

"Sir,

"Your most obedient Servant,

"GEORGE CANNING."

The discontent throughout the country, which hitherto, even in its utmost violence during the years 1817-18, did not exceed intemperate resolutions and angry speeches, assumed a more serious aspect at the Manchester meeting, on the 16th of August, 1819. A petition for Parliamentary Reform was the avowed purpose of the meeting. About this period, the summer of 1819, the disturbances reached their crisis, but the meeting at Manchester partook more of the character of a decided insurrectionary movement than any of the many meetings which were held throughout the country. The meeting was dispersed by the yeomanry; by the reformers the attack was represented as furious; they alleged that men and women were indiscriminately cut down. In their statements there was, of course, much exaggeration, but it is certain that several lives were lost, and that many were wounded, partly by the yeomanry, and partly in consequence of the confusion created by the sudden scattering of so vast a multitude (70,000 persons). Public sympathy was naturally excited for the sufferers, and the subject engrossed the attention of the nation. Parliament met in November. Mr. Canning's speech at the opening of the session, contains a powerful commentary on the proceedings at those meetings;—the characters of the persons by whom they were conducted;—and the objects at which those persons aimed. During the session, six bills, which, in their progress through Parliament, encountered

very great opposition, were introduced by ministers. As these bills were supported by Mr. Canning, it may not be foreign from the design of this work, to present here a summary of their enactments. First—meetings of this nature, which, in the opinion of ministers, had so long threatened the quiet of the country, were declared illegal. This prohibition extended to a period of five years. Secondly—a stamp duty was laid upon periodical works, published in succession within a term of twenty-six days. Thirdly—securities were required from persons exercising the business of printing. Fourthly—persons convicted a second time for seditious or blasphemous libels, were liable to the penalty of banishment, at the discretion of the Court. Fifthly—a power was given to magistrates in certain districts, to authorise the entering upon any house, either by night or day, for the purpose of seizing arms. Sixthly—the object of another bill was the prevention of training or drilling, which it was shown had been carried on in the north to an extent which seemed to leave no doubt of the existence of a determination, on the part of the disaffected, to proceed to the extremities of insurrection and civil war.

In January, 1820, George the Third, full of honours as of years, terminated a reign, which, in its commencement, and throughout its progress, was beset by great difficulties—difficulties, however, which become merged and obscured in the splendour of the achievements by which it was illustrated, and in the trancendent importance of the political events which crowned it at its close.

Scarcely had his present Most Gracious Majesty, George the Fourth, ascended the throne of these realms, when a subject, deeply distressing to his royal mind, engrossed the attention of Parliament and of the empire. On the 5th of June, Queen Caroline arrived in England. Immediately on Her Majesty's arrival in this country, an inquiry was instituted into her conduct. This measure was declared to be rendered necessary, by His Majesty's ministers, in consequence of the sudden arrival of Her Majesty in England.

They declared that it was a duty imposed upon them by this step on Her Majesty's part; that it was reluctantly resorted to by them; and that it was not resolved upon until every effort had been tried, ineffectually, to reconcile Her Majesty to a residence on the Continent, which, with the advice of her friends, Her Majesty had chosen in 1814. To this advice Mr. Canning was avowedly a party. The reason why he deemed a residence abroad preferable for Her Majesty was, that "in this country, Faction had marked her for its own;" and he emphatically declared he would give the same advice under the same circumstances to his nearest relation. Mr. Canning was indebted to Her Majesty for many former acts of kind and attentive civility. The gratitude which this consideration inspired, and the circumstance of his having been the adviser of Her Majesty on the occasion of a somewhat similar inquiry, in 1806, induced Mr. Canning to abstain from bearing the part which his ministerial duty would have assigned him in promoting the prosecution, of which Her Majesty was now about to undergo the painful ordeal. He therefore resigned his place as President of the Board of Controul. His conduct, on this occasion, according to universal consent, was marked by the most perfect correctness and delicacy of feeling;—it violated none, even of the most rigid rules and principles of consistency;—and it gave not the slightest ground of offence, either to his Sovereign, or to his colleagues, with whom, from the relation in which he stood towards Her Majesty, he conceived that he could not with propriety co-operate. The full explanation which Mr. Canning has given of his conduct, and of the motives of it, happily precludes the expediency of further reference here to this much agitated topic of memorable and painful interest. The letter is addressed to one of Mr. Canning's constituents.

"Tuddenham, Norfolk, Dec. 22, 1820.

"My Dear Sir,—I left town on Wednesday, a few minutes after I had written to you, not thinking that I should

be quite as soon set at liberty to make to you the communication promised in my letter of that morning. I had hitherto forborne to make the communication, in order that I might not in any way embarrass others by a premature disclosure; and I certainly expected, in return, due notice of the time when it might suit them that the disclosure should be made. I have no doubt that the omission of such notice has been a mere oversight. I regret it only as it has prevented me from anticipating, with you and the rest of my friends at Liverpool, the announcement in a newspaper of an event in which I know your kind partiality will induce you to feel a lively interest. The facts stated in the *Courier* of Wednesday evening are stated in substance correctly. I have resigned my office. My motives for separating myself from the Government (however reluctantly at a conjuncture like the present), is to be found solely in the proceedings and pending 'discussions' respecting the Queen. There is (as the *Courier* justly assumes) but this one point of difference between my colleagues and myself. Those who may have done me the honour to observe my conduct in this unhappy affair from the beginning, will recollect that, on the first occasion on which it was brought forward in the House of Commons, I declared my determination to take as little part as possible in any subsequent stage of the proceedings. The declaration was made advisedly. It was made, not only after full communication with my colleagues, but as an alternative suggested on their part for my then retirement from the administration. So long as there was a hope of amicable adjustment, my continuance in the administration might possibly be advantageous: that hope was finally extinguished by the failure of Mr. Wilberforce's address. On the same day on which the Queen's answer to that address was received by the House of Commons, I asked and had an audience of the King; and at that audience (which I obtained the following day), after respectfully repeating to His Majesty the declaration which I had made a fortnight before in the House of Commons, and stating the impossibility of

my departing from it, I felt it my duty humbly to lay at His Majesty's feet the tender of my resignation.

"The King, with a generosity which I can never sufficiently acknowledge, commanded me to remain in his service, abstaining as completely as I might think fit from any share in the proceedings respecting the Queen, and gave me full authority to plead His Majesty's express command for so continuing in office.

"No occasion subsequently occurred in Parliament (at least, no adequate occasion) for availing myself of the use of this authority, and I should have thought myself inexcusable in seeking an occasion for the purpose; but, from the moment of my receiving His Majesty's gracious commands, I abstained entirely from all interference on the subject of the Queen's affairs. I did not attend any meetings of the Cabinet upon that subject. I had no share whatever in preparing or approving the Bill of Pains and Penalties. I was (as you know) absent from England during the whole progress of that Bill, and returned only after it had been withdrawn.

"The new state in which I found the proceedings upon my return to England, required the most serious consideration; it was one to which I could not conceive the King's command, of June, to be applicable. For a minister to absent himself altogether from the expected discussions in the House of Commons, intermixed as they were likely to be with the general business of the session, appeared to me quite impossible. To be present, as a minister, taking no part in those discussions, could only be productive of embarrassment to myself, and of perplexity to my colleagues. To take any part in them was now, as always, out of the question.

"From these difficulties I saw no remedy, except in the humble but earnest renewal to my Sovereign of the tender of my resignation, which has been now as most graciously accepted, as it was in the former instance indulgently declined.

"If some weeks have elapsed since my return to England, before I could arrive at this practical result, the interval has been chiefly employed in reconciling, or endeavouring to reconcile, my colleagues to a step taken by me in a spirit of the most perfect amity, and tending (in my judgment) as much to their relief as to my own.

"It remains for me only to add, that, having purchased, by the surrender of my office, the liberty of continuing to act in consistency with my original declaration, it is now my intention (but an intention perfectly gratuitous, and one which I hold myself completely free to vary, if I shall at any time see occasion for so doing) to be absent from England again, until the agitation of this calamitous affair shall be at an end.

"I am, &c. &c. &c.

"GEORGE CANNING."

The letter, addressed by the Directors of the East India Company to Mr. Canning, on his retirement from the Presidentship of the Board of Control, furnishes a flattering tribute to his talents and integrity. The parting expressions of this great Corporation with the minister, directly charged with the superintendence of their affairs for five years, breathe sentiments of confidence and esteem, which were but anticipatory of the corresponding sentiments, with which the nation hailed his subsequent acceptance of the first place in the councils of the nation.

"East India House, December 22nd, 1820.

"SIR—The Court of Directors of the East India Company have unanimously requested us to convey to you, the expression of their deep regret at your retirement from the high public station of President of the Board of Commissioners for the Affairs of India; and, at the same time, to testify to you the sincere respect with which they have

been impressed, by the able, upright, and conciliatory manner in which you have discharged the duties of that station.

"The functions of the Board, over which you have presided for a period of nearly five years, have been exercised with so much candour and courtesy, as well as with such invariable attention to the interests, both of the public and the Company, that they have been almost entirely divested of the invidious character, which must ever, in some degree, attach to a controlling Board.

"We reflect with peculiar gratification that, under your auspices, Company's servants have been selected by the Court of Directors for the distinguished appointments of Governors of two of the principal settlements in India, and have been cheerfully recommended to you by His Majesty for his gracious approbation.

"Whilst we assure you, in the name of the Court, that you carry with you the sincerest wishes of every possible happines , we desire individually to offer you our best acknowledgments for the attention and urbanity which we have uniformly experienced in the course of the communications which we have had the honour to hold with you, and which have been equally felt and acknowledged by our predecessors in the chair.

"We have the honour to be,
Sir,
"Your most obedient humble servants,
"G. A. ROBINSON,
"T. REID."

"The Right Hon. George Canning."

"Tuddenham, Norfolk, December 25th, 1820.

"GENTLEMEN—I have received, with a satisfaction which I cannot easily express, the letter, which you did me the honour to address to me on the 22nd instant.

"I beg you to say, for me, to the Court of Directors how

sensible I am of their kindness, and how proud I am of their testimony.

"The office, which has placed me in relation with that body, is one which, as you justly observe, the functions are somewhat of a necessarily invidious character.

"It would be presumptuous to arraign the wisdom of an institution, in the formation of which (with some slight changes and modifications) so many of the greatest politicians of our country, in the present age, have substantially concurred. But the fact is not the less true, that the Board of Commissioners for the Affairs of India exhibits, perhaps, the single instance of an authority, the power belonging to which is simply corrective, coercive, and repressive, partaking in no degree of any of those attributes, by which the exercise of harsh duties is, in other instances, softened and compensated—a power which may reduce or abolish establishments, but cannot create or extend them; may negative appointments, but cannot appoint to them; may check or stint the flow of beneficence, but cannot originate or suggest a single act of grace or favour.

"To have administered for five years such a power, not sacrificing (I hope) any of its duties, however disagreeable, to a fear of collision, and yet without incurring odium, would have been no small cause of self congratulation.

"The letter, which I have had the gratification to receive from you, carried that feeling much higher, and makes me reflect upon the years which I have passed in the administration of your affairs, as upon the period of my life, by which I shall be most anxious to be remembered.

"My concurrence in the appointments of two of your most distinguished servants to the Governments of Bombay and Madras, is among the acts of that administration, to which I look back with the greatest degree of complacency. I do not think, indeed, that the example of these appointments should pass into a rule. They are justifiable exceptions to a rule generally salutary. I can hardly conceive the care, in which it would be expedient that the

highest office of your Government should be filled otherwise than from England. That one main link, at least, between the systems of the British and Indian Governments, ought, for the advantage of both, in my opinion, to be invariably maintained.

"But, under the peculiar circumstances of British India, at the time when Mr. Elphinstone, first, and, afterwards, General Munro were selected for their respective destinations, I am satisfied that every consideration, as well of British as of Indian policy, was best consulted by their selections.

"It is at least a presumption of my sincerity in this conviction, that I had no acquaintance with either of those gentlemen, except through the medium of their services. It is a further satisfaction to me, that, with the exception of these two appointments, to which the law made my concurrence necessary, I can truly say, with respect to any nominations in your service, of whatever description, abroad or at home, I have never exercised any sort of interference, much less have urged any personal wish, or asked any personal favour.

"This declaration I might have thought unnecessary, had I not been informed that the contrary has been most unaccountably, as well as unwarrantably, imputed to me in some of your discussions in your Court of Proprietors. I am happy in an opportunity of addressing my denial of such an imputation to those, who have the best means of estimating the truth of that denial.

I take leave of you, Gentlemen, and of the Court of Directors, with the sincerest wishes for the prosperity of the great empire committed to their charge, in the welfare of which, I shall never cease, even in a private station, to take the deepest interest; and with a lasting sense of the candour and cordiality, which have uniformly prevailed in my intercourse with all those members of your body with whom I have been brought immediately into contact.

To you, Gentlemen, who are the organs of the Court on

the present occasion, I am desirous of repeating my farewell in person; and (if the said commission should not be issued before I return to town next week) I shall be very glad to see you, for that purpose, at the India Board, on Tuesday or Thursday morning (the 2nd or 4th of January), as may best suit your convenience.

"I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,
"Your obedient and faithful servant,
"G. CANNING."

"To the Chairman and Deputy Chairman
of the East India Company."

At a meeting of the Court of Proprietors of the East India Company, in the following month of April, a resolution was unanimously passed, concurring in the sentiments conveyed by the Court of Directors to Mr. Canning, and emphatically expressive of their high admiration for his great talents, and their grateful sense of his meritorious services.

Early in the spring of this year, Mr. Canning sustained a severe domestic calamity in the loss of his eldest son, Mr. George Charles Canning, in the nineteenth year of his age. Mr. Canning feelingly records his sense of this calamity in the following beautiful epitaph, inscribed on an elegant monument in the new burying ground of Kensington.

"EPITAPH.

"GEORGE CHARLES CANNING,
"Eldest Son of
"The Right Honourable GEORGE CANNING, and
"JOAN SCOTT, his Wife;

"Born April 25, 1801.—Died March 31, 1820.

"Though short thy span, God's unimpeach'd decrees,
Which made that shorten'd span one long disease,
Yet, merciful in chastening, gave thee scope
For mild, redeeming virtues, Faith and Hope;

Meek Resignation; pious Charity;
And, since this world was not the world for thee,
Far from thy path removed, with partial care,
Strife, Glory, Gain, and Pleasure's flowery snare,
Bade Earth's temptations pass thee harmless by,
And fix'd on Heaven thine unaverted eye!
Oh! mark'd from birth, and nurtured for the skies!
In youth, with more than learning's wisdom, wise!
As sainted martyrs, patient to endure!
Simple as unwean'd infancy, and pure!
Pure from all stain, (save that of human clay,
Which Christ's atoning blood hath wash'd away!)
By mortal sufferings now no more oppress'd,
Mount, sinless Spirit, to thy destined rest!
While I—reversed our nature's kindlier doom—
Pour forth a father's sorrows on thy tomb."

During the two subsequent years (1821-22), Mr. Canning took little part in public affairs. He visited France and Italy with his family, but resided principally at Paris, where, free from the tumult of party, he moved in all the circles of literary and polished society which that fascinating capital contains. At this time he saw much of Viscomte de Chateaubriand, with whom he formed a friendship, which some differences of a political nature afterwards interrupted. He left Paris in 1821, expressly for the purpose of attending Parliament, to support the Bill for the Removal of Roman Catholic Disabilities. His speeches on Lord John Russell's motion for Reform, and on his own measure for the Relief of the Roman Catholic Peers, in this year (1822), are amongst the most finished specimens of his eloquence. Mr. Canning, at the time of their delivery, was on the eve of his departure for a foreign destination, and these speeches were manifestly elaborate efforts, intended to be emphatic and parting admonitions to his country on the two great questions of which they treat.

In the early part of this year (1822), the Directors of the East India Company chose Mr. Canning to fill the situation of Governor-General of Fort William, in the Presidency of

Bengal, the seat of the Supreme Government of British India. Previous to his intended departure for that destination, he paid a farewell visit to Liverpool. Public entertainments on a scale of the most munificent hospitality were here given, by his constituents, to a representative, between whom and them a connexion for ten years had subsisted, that had been to both, from its commencement in 1812, to its close in 1822, a source of reciprocal pride, of mutual esteem, and increasing confidence.

In reference to this appointment, and to the circumstances under which it was conferred, he says—"When called to office, in 1816, I was called to a department perfectly alien from my official habits, and with the business of which I had no previous acquaintance: but, in the course of nearly five years' diligent administration of that department, it has so happened, that I am supposed, by those in whom the law has vested the power of appointing to the Government of India, to have qualified myself for the more immediate direction of that Government, over the concerns of which it has been my duty to exercise a distant superintendence."

A valuable piece of plate was presented to Mr. Canning, by his friends and constituents, on his expected departure from England to assume the Government of British India. The following description of it is extracted from the *Liverpool Courier* of March 19, 1823:—

"It is a centre ornament, or candelabrum, forty-two inches high, and upwards of sixty in circumference at the base. It is silver gilt, and weighs upwards of one thousand ounces. The base in the tripod form, and rests upon three tortoises. In the plinth are three compartments, six inches wide by two and a half high. The first compartment contains a view of the port of Liverpool. A ship under sail appears in the foreground of the picture, and in the background George's Dock, Pierhead, with St. Nicholas's Church, the Town Hall, St. Paul's, St. George's, and St. Thomas's Churches in the distance. The second compartment contains a representation of a section of the Town

Hall. The scene chosen is that of an election. Hustings are erected in the front: bars for several candidates are open: a crowd of spectators is congregated before them; and a coach, filled with voters in the interest of Mr. Canning, accompanied with music and flags, the latter having inscribed on them—*'The British Constitution,' 'The Friend of the Pilot that weather'd the Storm,' 'Canning for ever!'* &c., is represented in the act of approaching his bar. The Right Honourable Gentleman appears in the centre, surrounded by his friends, in the act of addressing the multitude of spectators, some of whom are elevated upon the hustings, loudly cheering their favourite candidate. The *'State of the Poll'* appears on the side of Mr. Canning's bar; and, in the distance, the lofty buildings on the north side of Dale Street are seen, their windows and roofs crowded with spectators surveying the animated scene beneath. The third compartment exhibits a view of the interior of the House of Commons, the theatre in which Mr. Canning so often displays his great and unrivalled talents. The Speaker is in the chair: the mace is on the table before him: the benches are crowded with members; and Mr. Canning is represented as standing on the floor, in the act of addressing the chair. The base of the pedestal represents a coral rock. Upon it, at the angles, are seated three beautiful classic figures, under palm-tree leaves. The first figure is emblematical of SCIENCE. In her hand she holds a book, written in Oriental characters, which she is in the act of perusing. At her feet are spread a variety of appropriate scientific instruments and symbols. The second figure is a personification of NAVIGATION. The compass rests upon her knee; and in her hand she holds the log-line and lead. On the right, at her feet, a staff, with a union jack on it, an anchor and cable, a rudder, a capstan, and other nautical emblems are appropriately disposed: on the right, a buoy. COMMERCE is the third figure. She holds in her right hand a laurel crown, and in her left a palm branch, emblematic of the peace and harmony which commercial intercourse

creates amongst the different nations of the globe. Various appropriate symbols are displayed at her feet also. On the right appear a bale of goods, and other articles of commercial traffic: on the left, a cornucopia, or horn of plenty, the caduceus, &c. &c. These three personifications of the Genius of Science, of Navigation, and of Commerce, are exquisitely beautiful. The figures are most chastely executed, and the drapery is well disposed. They are amongst the most prominent excellencies of the design. On the pedestal, between these figures, are three tablets. The first tablet exhibits the arms of the borough of Liverpool tastefully executed. The next displays Mr. Canning's arms, richly embossed, with the motto—*Ne cede malis sed contra.* The third contains the inscription, very neatly executed, on a flat gold field, in raised bright letters. It is as follows:—

'PRESENTED
TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
GEORGE CANNING,
BY A NUMEROUS BODY OF HIS FRIENDS,
FREEMEN AND INHABITANTS OF
LIVERPOOL,
ON HIS BEING APPOINTED GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF INDIA,
JULY, 1822,
IN GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENT
OF HIS ZEALOUS AND IMPARTIAL ATTENTION
TO THE INTERESTS OF ALL HIS CONSTITUENTS,
FOR A PERIOD OF TEN YEARS,
IN THE COURSE OF WHICH,
HE HAS BEEN FOUR TIMES ELECTED
THEIR REPRESENTATIVE IN PARLIAMENT;
AND IN TESTIMONY OF THEIR RESPECT,
AS WELL FOR HIS PRIVATE VIRTUES
AS FOR HIS DISINTERESTED INDEPENDENT
PUBLICK CONDUCT;
AND OF THEIR ADMIRATION
OF THOSE TRANSCENDENT TALENTS,
AS A STATESMAN AND AN ORATOR,
WITH WHICH HE HAS UNIFORMLY AND FEARLESSLY
MAINTAINED THE TRUE PRINCIPLES OF
THE BRITISH CONSTITUTION.'

"A handsome fluted naval column springs from the pedestal. Its base is begirt with a cable; and three dolphins are represented disporting themselves at the angles. On the upper part of the column, and surrounding it, are inscribed—'Election of 1812,' 'Election of 1816,' 'Election of 1818,' 'Election of 1820;' the four periods at which Mr. Canning was returned to Parliament as representative of Liverpool. Above these inscriptions appear the prows of three ships, with figure-heads; the first representing a native of Asia, the second of Africa, and the third of America. The capital of the column is beautifully chaste. From it issue acanthus leaves; attached to which are branches for nine lights. The summit of the whole is crowned by a beautiful classic figure, emblematic of the Genius of Liverpool, her right hand resting on a ship's rudder, and her left on a broad and glittering shield, on which is depicted the fabulous bird, the LIVER. On her head she wears a mural crown; and her drapery falls in simple elegance over her finely proportioned form.

"As a work of art, this splendid piece of plate is decidedly of the first class: superior, in our opinion, to any modern composition, of a similar kind, which we have seen. There is an unity and elegance in the design, equalled only by the exquisite manner in which its various parts are finished. The work reflects the highest credit on Mr. Chantry, the designer, as well as on Messrs. Rundell and Bridge, and the various artists whom they have employed in executing this beautiful specimen of British genius and skill.

"To the feelings of Mr. Canning and his family it must be highly gratifying. Rarely, indeed, in the representative history of England, have the services of a representative been rewarded with such a mark of public approbation. The intrinsic value of the plate is of little consideration. The proofs of affection and esteem which such gifts embody, give to them a value more durable than the perishable materials of which they are composed. In the present in-

stance, the design silently, but eloquently, relates, in epitome, the history of Mr. Canning's public connexion with Liverpool, from its commencement, in the year 1812, until the period of his intended departure for India. And it will tell to his latest posterity the respect and admiration in which his character and talents were held by the inhabitants of this great commercial community. Nor is it less gratifying to the feelings of the subscribers. It is a small, but sincere, token of the high respect which they entertain for Mr. Canning; of their gratitude for the services which he has rendered to Liverpool; of their admiration of his talents as a statesman and an orator; and of their deep regret at the prospect of parting with so gifted an individual. Above all, it will perpetuate those great political principles which first recommended Mr. Canning to their notice, and of which he has, on all occasions, been the eloquent and fearless defender."

An unexpected change in the destination of Mr. Canning now took place. Every arrangement for the sailing of the Jupiter (seventy-four), which was to convey him to India, had been completed; and it might be almost literally said that, at the moment at which he was about to embark, the death of the Marquis of Londonderry created a vacancy in the office of Chief Secretary for Foreign Affairs. The public eye immediately turned towards Mr. Canning, as the person in every respect the best qualified to be his successor. Mr. Canning had already filled that office, with great advantage to the empire, from 1807 to 1809. He had been offered (as has been already stated) the same office in 1812, but declined its acceptance. Now, however, that all the obstacles had been removed, which prevented his acceptance of it at that period, the public wish was strongly expressed that he should resume an office more important to his native country, and one in which the exercise of his powers would be more immediately connected with the interests and welfare of England, than it

was possible that they could be during his superintendence of the distant Government of India. The expression of public opinion found an echo in the royal breast, and early in September, on the return of the King from Scotland, where he had been on a visit at the time of Lord Londonderry's death, the Seals of the Foreign Office were presented to Mr. Canning.

The Congress of Verona was now about to meet. Indeed the demise of Lord Londonderry occurred in the week in which he had intended to leave England to join it. The Duke of Wellington was appointed to succeed the noble lord as our representative at the Congress, and his grace took his departure for Verona, only eight-and-forty hours after Mr. Canning's appointment to the Foreign Department.

At the Congress, M. De Montmorency represented the existence of the actual Government of Spain, as inconsistent with the safety of monarchical power, and called upon the Sovereigns to make common cause against it; or, if they would not proceed so far, to look on with indifference or with favour, while France took up arms against so dangerous a neighbour, and re-established the throne of Ferdinand on the ruins of the Cortes. To this policy Russia was decidedly inclined; Austria and Prussia were less resolute for violent measures, though they agreed in condemning vehemently the proceedings of the Cortes. England, on the contrary, advocated the cause of peace, and in the instructions communicated by Mr. Canning to the Duke of Wellington, after a declaration by Mr. Canning, how objectionable in principle and how impracticable in execution any such interference would be—his grace is directed "at once frankly to declare, that to any such interference, *come what may, His Majesty will not be a party.*"

The war, then meditated by France, and subsequently prosecuted against Spain, was justly execrated by all the friends of rational freedom, and was openly defended by no

class of persons in this country. It was an unjust war, provoked by one country desirous of enforcing her own institutions as a model for the adoption of another, thereby in its principle striking at the rights of nations. The Spanish Government of the Cortes had been recognised, by positive treaty, by those very powers which now conspired to destroy it. The faith of Ferdinand was pledged to maintain it—that pledge was violated; and thus the sympathy for the Spanish Constitution, cherished by the advocates of the representative principle throughout Europe, was stimulated into active zeal by the consciousness, that that zeal was exercised on behalf of a struggling people, whose oppression had been aggravated by gross ingratitude and treachery. On the other hand, it is to be regretted that the friends of the Constitution, in Spain, sanctioned many glaring defects in its formation, which prevented the sympathy in this country from being so complete and universal in their favour as it otherwise would have been. They evinced their hostility to religion by the abolition of tithes; and by the utter disregard which they ostentatiously exhibited for the interests of the clerical order—branding with the insulting epithet, "monkish superstition," those religious institutions for which (whatever abuses in the lapse of time may have crept into them) an attachment was moulded, as it were, into the very frame and constitution of the Spanish mind. They should have redeemed religion from its abuses by measures of gradual improvement, but the affections of a people are not to be torn "by sudden wrench" from all that, for ages, they have been accustomed to venerate and love. Again, the exclusion of the nobility from a legitimate share of political influence—this attempt to extinguish the ancient spirit of chivalry in the breast of the proud Castilian, was as foreign from the genius of the nation, as it was from the sound principles of Government, to exclude, from a due participation in all legislative duties, those who, from their high birth and large hereditary wealth, were most interested in

the welfare of the country. With these and other defects, the Constitution was unquestionably fraught—and the most tried and approved friends of freedom, in this country, were not slow in communicating to Spain the sense of those imperfections in the plan of her new Government.*

On Mr. Canning devolved the duty of stating the policy of the British Cabinet at this period. This duty he ably discharged in two speeches—one on the 14th of April, 1823, in laying before Parliament the diplomatic papers relative to the negociation on the state of affairs between France and Spain; and the other on the 30th of April, at the close of a debate on the same subject, which had been adjourned for two nights successively. The two speeches of Mr. Canning on this occasion are alike remarkable for their eloquence, for the clearness with which he explains all the intricacies of a very complicated subject, and for the ability with which he applies to individual cases the great and comprehensive principles of national law and the eternal principles of public justice. There has rarely been an occasion on which the anxiety of the country for a full

* In the treaty of 1812, His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias, speaking of the then Government, did use the very word by which he and his allies would themselves be designated—the word, by the abuse of which they were known—he did call the Spanish Government of the Cortes a *legitimate* Government, that very Government, of the constitution of which the Spaniards had not changed one word; and God forbid they should change even a letter of it, while they had the bayonet of the foreign soldier at their breast! He hoped, if it had faults—and some faults it might have—that when the hour of undisturbed tranquillity arrived, the Spaniards themselves would correct them. If they would listen to the ardent wish of their best friends—of those who had marked their progress, and gloried in the strides they had made towards freedom and happiness—and would go the world's end to serve them in their illustrious struggle—of those above all, who would not have them yield an hair's breadth to force—his counsel would be to disarm the reasonable objections of their friends, but not give up any thing to the menaces of their enemies.—*Mr. Brougham's speech, at the opening of the session, 1823.*

justification of a great measure, involving the national interests and honour, has been so completely satisfied and allayed, as on the propriety of the policy pursued by Mr. Canning on this occasion? Public opinion out of Parliament was adverse to an unprovoked crusade; and within Parliament an Address, not so much of direct disapproval, as of qualified approbation of the policy of England, was rejected by an almost unprecedented majority, whilst an Address of strong and unqualified sanction of it was passed without a division.

The policy of neutrality was strictly preserved—peace consistent with British interest and British honour was maintained—the national mind was reconciled to it—and the ability of the minister, by whose skilful negociations it was secured, was rewarded by the applauses of his country.

Before the next session of Parliament—that of 1824—the struggle, in support of the Spanish Constitution, terminated in an unsuccessful issue. In referring to the passage in the King's Speech, which contained an allusion to our foreign relations, Mr. Canning did not withhold the expression of his sympathy in the fate of the unfortunate brave men, who, to the last, were steadfast in their fidelity to the forlorn liberties of their country—"of those," to use his own expression, "who were then mourning in anguish over their defeated hopes, and whose misfortunes no individual talent, virtue, or exertion could avert!"

While France was engaged in prosecuting an invasion, against which, by mediation, by remonstrance, and every allowable means short of unwarrantable hostilities, England protested;—Mr. Canning was occupied in planning and effectuating a political movement, the reverse of invasion—the contrary of undue interference in the concerns of nations—and in every respect presenting not a parallel, but a contrast to the conduct of France. This grand movement consisted in the change which Mr. Canning produced in the avowed character of our relations with Spanish America;—a change beneficial to England for purposes of com-

mercial advantage and security—beneficial to Spanish America for the facilities which the recognition of her independence by Great Britain afforded towards the glorious completion of her legitimate object—the exclusion of a foreign and oppressive Government from her shores, which had been achieved by the virtuous and generous energies of the Spanish American people. The policy pursued by Mr. Canning on this occasion, as indeed on all great questions, was the adoption of a circumspect, safe, and gradual course of measures; which, whilst it left Spain and her colonies to settle their *de jure* relation, as they might, acknowledged and established the *de facto* separation.

In the month of July, an application was made to the Foreign Office, by a number of respectable merchants connected with the South American trade, submitting to the consideration of that department, whether it might not be fit to recommend to His Majesty, that commercial agents should be appointed to protect British interests in that quarter of the world. On the 22d of August, an answer was returned, by the direction of Mr. Canning, which stated, that the subject was under consideration, and shortly afterwards, consuls and consuls-general were appointed to the principal stations in Mexico, Colombia, Peru, Chili, and Buenos Ayres. In the latter part of the year, communications, with respect to these countries, took place between our Government and that of France.

Mr. Canning, in an interview on the subject with Prince Polignac, the French ambassador, declared, in very unequivocal terms, that although Great Britain was desirous that Spain herself should take the lead in acknowledging the independence of the South American colonies, she could not wait indefinitely for that event; and that should any foreign power join Spain in an enterprise against the Spanish colonies, Great Britain must then act as her own interest might require. To this judicious boldness of Mr. Canning, is mainly attributable the forbearance of any other continental power than Spain, from interfering to strangle

the infant liberties of the New World. The Court of Spain remonstrated against the recognition by England of the republics of Spanish America, which had established their independence; and this remonstrance occasioned a correspondence between the Spanish minister, M. Zea, and Mr. Canning, in which the latter asserted the right, and demonstrated the propriety of the policy which the British Government had adopted towards the infant states of Spanish America. It was not, however, until the early part of the year, 1825, that Mr. Canning sent a formal communication to the Foreign ministers accredited to our Court; in which he stated, "That in consequence of the repeated failures of the applications of His Majesty's Government to the Court of Spain, relative to the recognition of the independent states of Spanish America, His Majesty had come to a determination to appoint Chargés des Affaires to the States of Colombia, Mexico, and Buenos Ayres; and to enter into treaties of commerce with those respective states on the basis of the recognition of their independence."

This regular diplomatic intimation to the ministers at our Court, may be regarded as the crowning and completion of the recognition of the republics of Spanish America, the first steps towards which were taken in 1823.

It was in the course of this session (1823), that Mr. Canning, in his answer to Mr. Brougham, evinced an irascible temperament, and betrayed the little control which he had in forbearing from the most vehement expression when exasperated by a disreputable imputation being cast upon him. The writer of this Memoir happened to be present when the provocation was given, which elicited from him this strong ebullition of angry sentiment, as well as when the memorable altercation between Mr. Brougham and Mr. Canning occurred. The circumstances out of which it arose were these:—On one of the frequent discussions which took place relative to the affairs of Spain, Lord Folkestone, in a speech of unqualified condemnation of Mr. Canning's policy on this question, accused the Foreign Secretary of

truckling to France." Mr. Canning replied to him in the debate on the same evening, and after assuring the Noble Lord that he would never truckle to him, pronounced upon the speech of Lord Folkestone, and the manner of its delivery, a sentence of the bitterest invective that perhaps ever escaped him in Parliament. "The Lacedæmonians," said he, "were in the habit of deterring their children from the vice of intoxication, by occasionally exhibiting their slaves in a state of disgusting inebriety. But, Sir, there is a moral as well as a physical intoxication. Never before did I behold so perfect a personification of the character which I have somewhere seen described as 'exhibiting the contortions of the Sybil without her inspiration.' Such was the nature of the noble lord's speech."

On a subsequent evening, 17th April, 1823, during a conversation in the House of Commons, which preceded the discussion of the Catholic Question, Mr. Brougham pronounced a severe philippic against the Foreign Secretary, in which, after insinuating very intelligibly that Mr. Canning, on accepting office, had entered into a compromise with Lord Eldon, to postpone and waive the consideration of the Catholic Question, he added, "And is it the Right Hon. Gentleman then who talks of not truckling to my Noble Friend (Lord Folkestone) — *he* — who has himself exhibited the most incredible specimen of monstrous truckling for the purpose of obtaining office, which the whole history of political tergiversation can furnish." At this moment — Mr. Canning, whose changing features for the few preceding minutes were developing the deep agitation of his mind, rose, and said emphatically, "Sir, that is false." This abrupt and most unexpected interruption entranced the House for some moments in amazement. Mr. Brougham was restrained by his friends from leaving the House immediately. The Serjeant at Arms was summoned to attend — a motion was made and withdrawn, that Mr. Canning and Mr. Brougham should be taken into custody — explanation succeeded to explanation — but all that followed the inter-

ruption by the Right Honourable Secretary—the moment of intense interest—was but as "the pattering of rain after a thunder-storm". The fury of the bolt was spent—and with its exhausted rage expired the awe and the interest awakened by the shock. The result was, that after mutual and suitable explanations on both sides, Mr. Canning and Mr. Brougham, with perfect propriety and honour to themselves, in the estimation of the House and of the country, agreed "to think no more about the matter."

One excuse, and one only, may be suggested for the conduct of Mr. Canning on this occasion—namely, the spirit-stirring provocation to intemperate retort which was conveyed in the language—and even less in the language than in the manner of Mr. Brougham. The sarcastic tone—the vehement gesture—the deep and disdainful denouncement expressed in the whole of his delivery of this passage of his speech, cannot be contained within the limits of any description.

During the sessions of 1823, 1824, 1825, and 1826, the consideration of the Abolition of Slavery came under frequent discussion in Parliament. On this question, Mr. Canning advocated a middle and mediatorial course between contending parties—the advocates of the extreme principles of immediate abolition on the one side, and of perpetual slavery on the other. He pledged the House of Commons to resolutions for the gradual Amelioration of the Condition of the Slave Population in the West Indies, and in several speeches, especially in a most eloquent one on the 16th of March, 1824, he developed his own views and those of Government on this momentous measure.

In 1825, many of the numerous and extravagant speculations, in which a vast capital had been embarked, terminated in fatal and destructive failure to those who had engaged in them, and the bursting of the bubble involved the country in great pecuniary embarrassments. The credit of the nation was deeply affected by the disastrous results of those rash enterprises, and bankruptcy fell upon many of

the most respected and wealthy merchants and bankers in the land, and, for a time, impended over all classes of the community. Mr. Canning vindicated the Government from the imputation of having, in any degree, sanctioned the speculations from which such calamitous consequences had flowed. "For myself," said he, "I have never given a vote on any private business since I became a minister, and I believe the same rule has been observed by all my colleagues in administration. But has there been no warning given to the country on the part of ministers? Has there been no opportunity, during the fever which existed last year in the public mind, in which the King's Government had declared, that they would not advance a farthing to the aid of any difficulties which might ensue from excessive speculation? I might here, as on a matter of history, allude to what had occurred on a former occasion in another place. One of His Majesty's ministers, I mean my noble friend at the head of the Treasury (Lord Liverpool), speaking as the organ of that department of the state, and also in his capacity as a member of the Government, took an opportunity, early in March last, not five weeks after the commencement of the session, and before one single bill had passed, to hold out to all who were engaged in those speculations, that they were running wildly into them; that it was the essence of a free government not to interpose any legislative let or hindrance to the current of individual enterprise and industry; but that those who entered wildly into extravagant speculations, did so upon their own risk and responsibility; and that it was the fixed resolution of His Majesty's Government not to extend any pecuniary assistance to the difficulties which were likely to arise out of them. As far as the voice of Government could be heard, it was heard through the country."

The embarrassed state of the currency engaged the attention of Parliament at its meeting. Mr. Canning, with his wonted ability, pursued the causes of its variation, exposed the nature of the embarrassments, and propounded the expediency of the measure adopted by Parliament for re-

lieving them. The session of 1826 passed over without any business of momentous interest to call forth the powers of Mr. Canning, with the exception of the question of the Currency, and the discussion on the Silk-trade. His speech, in support of Mr. Huskisson's measure relative to that important branch of our manufactures, though short, is, perhaps, the most illustrative, in the whole collection, of the spirit and genius of his policy. The peroration of this speech is extremely beautiful;—perhaps it surpasses, in genuine eloquence, that of any speech of any orator in the English language. To the above exception should be added an important speech of Mr. Canning on a motion of Mr. Brougham, pledging the House early in the ensuing session to take into its most serious consideration such measures, as might be calculated to carry into effect the recommendation of the Government and of the House of Commons to the Colonial Legislatures, to ameliorate the condition of the slaves in the colonies.

At the close of the summer of this year, Mr. Canning paid a visit to his friend, Lord Granville, at Paris. He was received in that capital with all the demonstrations of respect due to his great talents, his exalted fame, and eminent station. The French ministers, the most distinguished members of the nobility and of the higher classes of society in Paris, invited him to sumptuous entertainments—even the court rules of etiquette, which forbid a subject to dine in company with the royal tenant of the Thuilleries, were dispensed with in his favour; and Mr. Canning had the honour of dining with the King and Royal Family of France. In every respect, Mr. Canning was treated as an illustrious stranger. The daily press of Paris noticed his movements, and the unassuming and frank affability of his address conciliated towards him marked respect wherever he went.

Parliament was dissolved at the close of the session of 1826. The general election took place in autumn, and the new Parliament was summoned on the 14th of November.

The principal object of its meeting, at this unusual period of the year, was to grant ministers an indemnity for the violation of the Corn Laws, by an Order in Council, of which they had been induced to avail themselves from the necessitous circumstances of the country. The indemnity was granted without opposition; indeed, Mr. Canning had taken a precautionary proceeding in the last session of the former Parliament, the effect of which was, to pledge their successors to an indemnity for a measure, of which, in the early part of the year, ministers anticipated and declared the necessity.

An unexpected topic now burst upon the attention of Parliament. Before the adjournment for the Christmas holidays, the Marquis of Palmella, the Portuguese Ambassador, accredited at the British Court, made a formal application for military assistance to our Government, to repel, from Portugal, the elements of strife with which Spain menaced that kingdom. The Court of Spain, both by insidious connivance, and permitted, if not sanctioned, aggression, endeavoured to subvert the legitimate Government—a Government which, from having assumed a constitutional form by virtue of the Charter given to it by its Sovereign, Don Pedro, was an object of peculiar hatred to the Spanish Apostolicals. To the defence of Portugal, and its lawful Government, against foreign aggression, the faith and honour of the British nation were pledged, both by ancient and modern treaties: accordingly, on the 11th of December, a Message from His Majesty was presented to both Houses of Parliament, expressing the King's confidence that they would enable His Majesty to maintain good faith with his ancient ally. On the following day, Mr. Canning moved the Address in a speech, in which he clearly described the various obligations, by treaty, into which this country had entered with Portugal, and eloquently enforced their observance. This speech, on the affairs of Portugal, is the master-piece of his eloquence. In propriety and force of diction—in excellence of appropriate and well-methodized arrangement—in

elevation of style and sentiment—and in all the vigorous qualities of genuine manly eloquence—boldness—judgment —firmness—it fully sustains its title to the high eulogy of Mr. Brougham, in which he declared his reliance "on those sound, enlightened, liberal, and truly English principles; principles worthy of our best times, and of our most distinguished statesmen which now govern the councils of this country in her foreign policy, and inspire the eloquence of the Right Honourable Secretary with a degree of fervour, energy, and effect, extraordinary and unprecedented in this House—unprecedented (I can give it no higher praise) even in the eloquence of the Right Honourable gentleman."

Now that the troops are about to be immediately withdrawn from Portugal, the results of this measure of British policy may be considered as fully before the world, and have triumphantly vindicated its propriety and wisdom. We have witnessed the cessation of foreign aggression—British faith, and British honour, have been upheld—and peace—the shiboleth of Mr. Canning's policy—has been preserved by the bold and judicious manifestation that, in a just cause, we did not dread war.

This was almost the last important measure that Mr. Canning originated, during the time that he presided over the foreign policy of this country. But, besides the measures which Mr. Canning may be said to have accomplished by the influence of his personal authority, as falling within the sphere of his immediate duties, many important changes and improvements, during the period that he was leading minister in the House of Commons, were introduced into various branches of our commercial policy, as well as into the practice and structure of our judicial system. These measures, as far as regarded the commerce of the country, were recommended to Parliament by Mr. Huskisson, to whom Mr. Canning conceded "the undivided glory" of them, whilst he avowed his readiness to share the responsibility of sanctioning and approving them. The principle of all these measures was the change from a restrictive system, adapted to former times, to an enlarged,

liberal, and comprehensive one, suited to the present exigency and condition of the country. The relaxation of the Navigation Laws, for instance, was a measure of policy rendered necessary by the situation in which this country found herself placed in her commercial relations with the other countries of Europe and of the world. The return of peace threw open to other countries the sea, of which, by a combination of law and victory, England had possessed the undoubted supremacy. From the time of the Commonwealth to the late change of system, Great Britain had imposed severe restrictions upon the commerce of other countries, with a view of protecting her own. She was desirous of preserving to her shipping the carrying trade, not only of the fruits of her own produce, but likewise of those of other countries. During the war, the superiority of her marine, the necessity which other nations felt for her manufactures, and the security which her maritime prowess gave her, placed in the possession of England, what had formerly been possessed by Holland, the principal carrying trade in the commercial market of Europe. On the return of peace, however, a stimulant was given to the competition of other nations, and the prohibitory enactments on foreign commerce were met by retaliatory duties; prohibition for prohibition, and restriction for restriction, were threatened and imposed, until the intercourse of other nations with us, and our intercourse with them, became checked and clogged by vexatious impediments. The principle of commercial enterprise thus became narrowed; if persevered in, it would have terminated in our utter destruction, but, by the wise interposition of judicious and salutary councils, it has been gradually thrown open. It would indeed be a foul reproach upon the maritime spirit of Great Britain, to suppose that she could not derive her just proportion of the advantages thus spread out for general competition. It is a rivalship which Providence has ordained—to which all mankind are entitled—which it is neither the right, nor, happily, within the power of any one people in the universe, by any effort of selfish legislation or

policy, to suppress. That a change, from a system of monopoly to one of righteous emulation and generous intercourse, may be unwelcome to the indolent is true: it is true too, that even to the deserving and industrious, it may for a time be inconvenient; but in the growing rivalship of all civilized states, the sound principles of policy, and the sounder and more immutable ones of justice unite in recommending it to our adoption.

Referring to another branch of legislation, it should be recorded, that to the amelioration of our judicial system Mr. Peel devoted himself sedulously and successfully. Several of the measures of amendment, or at least modifications of them, which he introduced into Parliament, had been before recommended by Sir Samuel Romilly, Sir J. Mackintosh, and other leading members of Parliament; but to Mr. Peel unquestionably belongs the merit of having made the tenure of office, and the facilities which it affords, available for bold, practical, and extensive improvements in the system of the jurisprudence of this country, which, besides great talent, industry, and perseverance, required the sanction of ministerial authority and station to accomplish. The repeal of the Alien Bill also (in repealing which Mr. Peel co-operated warmly with Mr. Canning) deserves to be regarded as "part and parcel" of the preceding measures which characterise that system of liberal policy with which the name of Mr. Canning is inseparably associated. And, indeed, upon every question of policy, relating to the foreign, domestic, and commercial interests of the empire, except the Catholic Question, there was an uniform, cordial, and complete unison in sentiment, and accordance in conduct, between Mr. Canning and Mr. Peel.

Before we come to the contemplation of Mr. Canning in the last and most exalted grade of his political life, it may not be an unacceptable digression to advert to his opinions upon some subjects, and to introduce some circumstances respecting him, which, although belonging properly to the consideration of his character, do not strictly belong

to any particular part of the present narrative of his political career.

Of education Mr. Canning was a warm advocate; he avowed frequently his opinion, that he considered it the greatest of all blessings in a state, because the safety of a state depends upon the morals of its inhabitants, and those morals on instruction. His opinions on this question will be found in a very able article on Mr. Brougham's plan of education, inserted in the Quarterly Review, for July, 1818, of which a great part, including all the latter portion of it, proceeded from the pen of Mr. Canning.

As to Mr. Canning's mode of correcting his speeches, of which a *fac simile* representation is given in the first volume;—it would appear from the corrected proofs of them, in the possession of the editor of this work, that the process of correcting his speeches had been to him a very arduous and even painful occupation. From the sensitive refinement of his taste, which sometimes bordered on the verge of fastidiousness, he not only directed a proof-sheet to be sent to him, but sometimes even required a second and a third revise of that sheet to be submitted to his inspection. Frequently in this process of correction, he would restore a phrase which at first he had either altered or erased; and, in some instances, his alterations were not manifest improvements. At least, on some occasions, what certain passages of the speech gained in accuracy, they lost in vigour, and in spirit of expression. The principal advantages derived to his speeches from his revision of them, was the imparting to them an extreme beauty and precision of style and sentiment—the clothing of the figures of eloquence, with which his speeches abound, in a perfectly appropriate drapery of language—and the arranging of his arguments in an intelligible, clear, and logical form. He sometimes interpolated a few sentences in the proofs submitted to him for revision, but did so rather for the purpose of conveying his meaning with more force and fullness, than either of retracting or qualifying.

what he had orlginally and really uttered in debate. To such a degree of polish and of nicety had he refined his style, as not only to appear incapable of saying any thing that was vulgar, but unwilling even to avow the authorship of any expression that was not contained within the precincts of an elaborate harmony. Sometimes he would even reject an idiomatic term, and have recourse to a periphrasis, to avoid it. For instance, rather than be heard to utter "cat's paw" (a perfectly idiomatic phrase), he would say, "the paw of a certain domestic animal;" and to escape from the direct use of the term "Quixotic," he would preface its introduction by an apologetic circumlocution—speaking of the *thing* to which he wished to apply it, as "an enterprise romantic in its origin, and thankless in its end, to be characterised only by a term borrowed from that part of the Spanish literature with which we are most familiar."

It has been supposed that Mr. Canning wrote his speeches previous to the delivery of them. This is an erroneous supposition;—on important occasions he read and meditated on the subject on which he was about to speak, and took notes to guide him in the course of his remarks. But it was a matter of surprise among his friends, with how very few notes he provided himself preparatory to any great oratorical effort. His speeches in reply, display the astonishing retentiveness of his memory, by the accuracy with which they embrace every argument adduced during the whole night's discussion, without the aid of a note or written memorandum of any kind. He poured out his arguments in reply, in the same full flow of rich and copious eloquence, which characterised his speeches on occasions which might be supposed to animate and induce him to an elaborate exertion. This equality in the style of his extemporaneous effusions, and of speeches, where opportunity for previous preparation was afforded, refutes the charge—somewhere preferred against him—of merely dealing in manufactured declamation. This enviable faculty of speaking eloquently at all times, and on all subjects, was the result of early discipline in frequent

and varied composition—it proceeded from years of assiduous habits of industry, in writing, in reading, and still more in thinking;—and to estimate the time which Mr. Canning took in the preparation of his celebrated speech on the affairs of Portugal—it is not merely the few hours which he may have meditated on the subject, that are to be taken into account, but the hours and years of by-gone study—of political experience—of accumulated knowledge of constitutional and continental history, which matured his mind, and made it adequate to that master-effort of his genius.

Of the liberty of the press Mr. Canning was a warm advocate; one of the finest passages in his speeches is the beautiful comparison which he institutes between the power of steam, in the new application of its might to nautical science, and the power of public opinion embodied in a free press, in the pervading and almost irresistible influence which it exercises in political science. At the same time that Mr. Canning advocated its utility, and was sensible how much, in the legitimate exercise of its power, it promoted the diffusion of salutary knowledge, and swayed the public mind for beneficial purposes, he stood, as a public man, independent of its partialities;—its abuses he restrained—its support he valued—but to its authority he refused to bow. He made no unworthy compromise to secure its services—he well knew that its advocacy could only avail him as long as it was accordant with the national sentiment—and that it ceased to be available for any good purposes whatsoever, when it ceased to be unbought and free. Such was the voluntary and unbidden character of the powerful advocacy and co-operation which his administration received from the leading journals of the daily press, which direct and control public opinion only in proportion as they obtain from the nation credit for the ability, and confidence for the integrity with which they defend the Commonweal, and discuss the measures which affect its interest. To talk of purchasing such a mighty organ of national sentiment (a charge

idly insinuated against Mr. Canning) is mere trash. A portion of the press, it is true, may be purchased for puffing and other vile purposes; but they who may be inclined to make the experiment, will find it to be a very profitless purchase. It is one which "may enrich him who *takes*," but which "leaves him who *gives*, poor indeed."

The sentiments of Mr. Canning respecting the press, will be found fully and most eloquently expressed, in his speeches on the Newspaper Stamp Duty Bill, and the Blasphemous Libel Bill, in the fourth volume of this work.

On the value of Parliamentary reports, he set a just estimate. He could not but be conscious how his own fame was sustained and even augmented by the assiduity and ability displayed by the Parliamentary reporters, in giving correct and copious reports of his speeches in Parliament. The importance of his speeches, especially of later years, and the eloquence of them at all times, rendered them particularly acceptable to the public, and these two reasons may account for the fulness and accuracy with which his speeches generally appeared in the newspapers. As to what some persons term *favouritism* to Mr. Canning, or to any member of Parliament, by the reporters, it is a partiality with which they certainly are not justly chargeable. If such a sentiment, indeed, were acted upon, the whole value that arises from the permitted practice of reporting the debates in Parliament would be destroyed. And if the speeches of Mr. Canning, Mr. Brougham, Mr. Huskisson, Mr. Peel, Mr. Tierney, Sir F. Burdett, and other more distinguished speakers in Parliament, have been more fully reported than those of Sir **** and Mr. ****, who often occupy a longer time than these eminent members in the share which they assume to themselves of the discussion;—it is because the former have uttered more of what is eloquent—important—instructive—and usefully communicative, than less gifted speakers can convey in a distended and driftless declamation of several hours. For this reason, a judicious discretion in omitting what is unimportant—a discrimination in selecting

the grain of matter from the bushel of declamation which sometimes encompasses it," is as valuable a requisite for purposes of Parliamentary reporting, as are an accurate and extensive general knowledge, a quick apprehension, a retentive memory, and a rapid penmanship, which are the qualifications that go to constitute a well-qualified Parliamentary reporter.*

Mr. Canning, on several occasions, made kind inquiries respecting persons by whom reports of his speeches were given with superior ability;—and there are instances of persons having been recommended to his notice in this way, to whose interests he was afterwards serviceable.† One

* On the importance of the duties which Parliamentary reporters have to discharge to society, Lord Erskine has recorded the following just and eloquent opinion:—"I cannot conceive a more difficult or painful exertion of the human faculties, than that by which the proceedings in Parliament are generally preserved; and so far from being disposed to peevish criticisms upon their imperfections, I have always thought that where malice or undue partialities could not be fairly attributed to them, they were entitled to the utmost encouragement and indulgence. It would leave a wretched blank in our history, and might in the end be fatal to our liberties, if they were prohibited, or should fall into disuse."

† Connected with this subject of Mr. Canning's conduct towards the press, it may not be inappropriate to introduce an anecdote which places that conduct in a very kind and considerate point of view. It was at a moment when parties ran very high in the country, and when the greater portion of the public press teemed with the abuse of His Majesty's Ministers: so much so, indeed, that it was pretty generally rumoured, that Government contemplated the imposition of a censorship upon that great organ of public communication. It was even announced in one of the journals of the metropolis, that his grace the Duke of Wellington had specifically suggested such a measure in the Cabinet.

The hint of a project so pregnant with abuse and danger to the free institutions of this country, could not be expected to pass unnoticed in the House of Commons, where accordingly it was alluded to in terms of vehement animadversion. Mr. Canning at once put an end to all apprehension respecting a censorship, by giving the fullest denial to the insinuation that it had ever been discussed in the Cabinet. He used, however, in the hurry of debate,

remarkable instance of it occurred to the knowledge of the writer of this Essay, which he only abstains from mention-

a phrase which implied, while unexplained, that such a proposition was not absolutely new to the Government, for, in the course of his speech, he said, "That it had not been thought of *passing a quarter of an hour*." This speech was delivered late on a Friday night, and the words we have mentioned appeared in the report of the following morning in the *Times* Journal; but by either an oversight of the reporters for the other newspapers, or an omission, in abridging the speech, in consequence of the lateness of the hour, the *Times* was the only morning paper in which the phrase above quoted appeared. The *Courier* evening paper of Saturday immediately charged the conductors of the *Times*, with an interpolation of the report, for the purpose of casting an unworthy stigma upon the Government, and roundly asserted that Mr. Canning had never uttered these words, fortifying this assertion by an appeal to all the other morning papers in which they were omitted.

This severe imputation upon his integrity met, on the same evening, the eye of the late Mr. John Ross, who was then one of the reporters for the *Times*, and who had taken notes of the speech in question. This gentleman felt at once that he was implicated in the charge of the *Courier*, either by being himself the inventor of the words attributed to Mr. Canning, or permitting others to make such an interpolation in his report: and determined with promptitude and propriety to take the best means of justifying himself and his employers. Upon reference to his notes, he found an abbreviation of the words, "passing quarter of an hour," and the singularity of the phrase, convinced him that he could not have mis-interpreted their sound upon his ear. Knowing that he had the following day (Sunday) before him for inquiry, and rightly anticipating, that when the hour of business at the *Times* office recommenced on that evening, to prepare the publication of the following morning, he would be called upon to verify and vindicate the impugned report, he adopted the resolution of throwing himself at once upon Mr. Canning to bring the point to issue. He prepared a letter on Saturday night, addressed to the Right Honourable Gentleman, in which he stated, that he took the liberty of appealing to him for a mark of courtesy and justice—that he was one of the Parliamentary reporters of the *Times*, whose engagement depended upon the sense which his employers entertained of the impartiality and fidelity with which he performed his duty—that Mr. Canning, as a public man, must be well aware of the inadequate accommodation

ingly as he has not now an opportunity of obtaining the permission to do so from the surviving party to whom it refers.

afforded to the reporters in the gallery of the House of Commons, and of the various interruptions to which they were exposed, while engaged in their laborious and responsible occupation; and would consequently be disposed to look with some allowance upon the mistakes which such difficulties often unavoidably induced. Mr. Ross then pointed his attention to the two newspapers (which he had inclosed), and intreated that Mr. Canning would do him the justice of communicating to him his opinion upon the correctness of that passage in the report, which had called forth such an attack. In conclusion, Mr. Ross said, that he was not engaged in the political controversy of the press, and was only solicitous to set himself right with the establishment to which he belonged, either by a verification of his report, for which he knew he would be immediately called upon; or an acknowledgment of his error, if he heard from such conclusive authority as Mr. Canning's, that he had entirely mistaken his words.

Mr. Ross set out early on Sunday morning to Gloucester Lodge, Brompton, to deliver his letter, and was informed by one of Mr. Canning's servants at the gate, that his master was not at home, but that any message left would be communicated to him. Mr. Ross accordingly delivered his letter, and proceeded on his return about a quarter of a mile from Gloucester Lodge, when his attention was aroused by the voice of somebody, who was loudly vociferating. On turning round, he observed the same servant to whom he had just spoken, running breathless after him; the man apologised to Mr. Ross, and said, that he had denied his master's being at home, because Mr. Canning was not in the habit of receiving strangers on Sunday, but that, on delivering his letter, he had desired the writer to be shown in to him. Mr. Ross quickly returned to Gloucester Lodge, and was introduced to Mr. Canning, who had some books before him in his library. Mr. Canning, after desiring him to take a chair next the table, said, that he had merely cast his eye over the letter, and caught an outline of its import; and upon observing that Mr. Ross had come some distance, and mentioned his intention of calling again in the evening for an answer, he was anxious to spare him that trouble, and had therefore desired him to be sent for at once. He then begged Mr. Ross to state the nature of his business, as he had only given a cursory glance to his letter. Mr. Ross immediately complied with this request, and pointed the Right Honourable Gentleman's attention to the report in the *Times*, and

If all the other distinct and determinate characters of the life of Mr. Canning were blotted out and forgotten, it would furnish a proud epitaph for his monument, that, according

the attack upon it in the *Courier*; he likewise showed the notes which he had taken of the speech, in which the particular words were roughly legible.

Mr. Canning frankly admitted his belief that he had used the phrase in question, a candour the more honourable to him, for he followed up this admission by observing, that the phrase escaped from him in the inadvertence of unpremeditated speech—that he felt its impropriety, as it implied a temporary qualification of a contradiction, which he meant to be unequivocal and complete—and he, in a jocular way, regretted that Mr. Ross had not fallen into "the error of omission" of his brother reporters, and thereby relieved him from the necessity of admitting the unguarded use of a form of speech, which was calculated to mar his real meaning. He added, that in frankly giving this admission to Mr. Ross, he was most anxious to guard himself against being made an instrument of newspaper controversy upon such a topic; and that while he could have no objection, in justice to a man who was wrongfully attacked, to permit Mr. Ross to verify this passage in the report to his employers, he must interdict the public intrusion of his name, should "hostilities" continue on the subject, between the two newspapers. Mr. Ross expressed his thanks to Mr. Canning for the considerate kindness he had shown to him, and after remaining nearly an hour with him in his library, conversing upon different subjects, withdrew. Mr. Canning's courtesy, and sense of justice to a stranger, did not however stop here, for Mr. Ross had scarcely returned to his house in North Street, Lambeth, when the same servant, who had spoken to him in the morning at Gloucester Lodge, rode on horseback to his door, bearing a letter from Mr. Canning, in which the Right Honourable Gentleman stated, that as Mr. Ross's object, in seeking the explanation which he had given him that morning, was to justify himself to others, it would perhaps be satisfactory to him, that the purport of his (Mr. Canning's) remarks were reduced to writing, which he had done accordingly. Mr. Ross could never mention this anecdote, without expressing his sense of the candour and high minded feeling which Mr. Canning evinced on the occasion; and the contrast it presented to the conduct of other public men, who had evinced very different feelings under circumstances not dissimilar.

to his opportunities and his means, to struggling merit he was a kind and liberal patron.

The sketch of Mr. Canning's political career now approaches that period at which, after a variety of prosperous and adverse vicissitudes of political life, he reached the highest station which the legitimate ambition of a British subject can attain.

On Saturday, the 17th of February, Lord Liverpool was seized with an attack of apoplexy; the attack was so severe, as to preclude all hope that he should ever recover strength for the efficient discharge of his ministerial functions. The event of this severe malady, by which he was in an instant struck down and deprived at once of physical and intellectual power, was generally regretted. Prime Ministers there no doubt have been of more enlarged views and more brilliant talents, but there have been none who, in the general opinion, "bore his faculties" more meekly than Lord Liverpool, or who more completely conciliated the suffrages of all men in respect for his private virtues and for the tendencies of his mind, which were inclined to do whatever he conscientiously believed to contribute to the good and service of his country. On the political demise of Lord Liverpool, the public eye was naturally directed towards a successor. Mr. Canning, at this time, was at Brighton, slowly convalescent from a severe attack of inflammation, brought on by his attendance at the Duke of York's funeral. In Lord Liverpool, Mr. Canning had lost a warm personal friend—an admirer of his talents—and a colleague who placed unbounded confidence in him. Of his remaining colleagues in the Cabinet, there were some, Mr. Huskisson, Mr. Robinson, and Lord Harrowby, who, attached to him by the double bonds of private friendship and of public principle, recognised his right to that station, to which, by the accordant voice of his Sovereign and of the country, he was subsequently raised. There were other members of the Administration, however, the Duke of Wellington, &c. who, though willing to act with Mr. Canning

as a co-ordinate colleague, were not disposed to be members of an administration of which he should be the Premier. Rivalry of Mr. Canning, and ambition to obtain the station each for himself, have been alleged to have actuated the conduct of Mr. Peel and the Duke of Wellington on this occasion. The statements of both these eminent men on the meeting of Parliament, after the recess, deny this imputation. The Duke of Wellington*—the principal ground of whose resignation was the same as that of Mr. Peel—declared that his habits and pursuits rendered him unambitious of the station;—and Mr. Peel, in his explanation, freely admitted all the requisites of talent and experience which Mr. Canning possessed to qualify him for the station, and vindicated the propriety of the course he had himself taken, on the ground that he—Mr. Peel—the leading opponent of the Catholic Question, could not consistently accept office under its most able and eloquent advocate.

Mr. Canning was sufficiently recovered to resume his duties in Parliament in March. The King's personal regard towards Lord Liverpool, as well as that of all his colleagues, induced the postponement of nominating a successor to him, whilst a possible hope of his recovery remained. Meanwhile the utmost anxiety prevailed in the public mind, from the 17th of February to the 12th of April. The weaving of intrigues was alleged—the planning

* The political difference which interrupted the friendship of the Duke of Wellington and of Mr. Canning, at this period, cannot fail to be a source of regret to their respective admirers and friends. There was no member of the British Cabinet who more strenuously supported the Duke of Wellington throughout all his Peninsular campaigns than Mr. Canning; and of the many tributes which have been paid to his merits and services, the eloquence of Mr. Canning has supplied the happiest and the best. "The picture of this great man (said Mr. Canning), which History will trace for Posterity, will unite with the figure of a Warrior, the attributes of a benevolent Spirit, extending a guardian influence over nations once oppressed, and by him recovered and regenerated."

of plots and counterplots invented—an invitation to dinner, or a visit to the Opera, was construed into an event big with the most important national results.

Amid the contending influences and claims of persons, the most prevalent and popular expression of feeling was decidedly in favour of Mr. Canning. It was generally felt that he could not, without the most abject prostration of his claims to persons of inferior pretension, accept a subordinate situation in the formation of a new administration. His political experience—his talents—the questions of foreign policy with which his name was associated, and the direction of which hung upon his councils—all conspired in attaching to him the public hope and wishes that he might be the successor of Lord Liverpool;—besides, for five years before, through the entire confidence which Lord Liverpool placed in him, it may be truly said, that his intellect was the presiding one in the Cabinet, and that he was virtually the leading minister of the country.

At length it was announced, that the King had laid his commands on Mr. Canning to form an administration. The purport of the Royal commands to Mr. Canning at first, was, to form an administration, by putting into Lord Liverpool's place some one professing his lordship's opinions upon the Catholic Question. With this requisition Mr. Canning could not consistently comply, with due regard to what he owed to his own claims to the Premiership, and to the ascendancy of those councils in matters of policy to which he was pledged. He declined the invitation to form a Cabinet in the manner proposed to him, and tendered his own resignation of office, to afford His Majesty an opportunity of constructing (should His Majesty think proper to do so) a Cabinet united in opposition to the Catholic Question. Whether His Majesty deemed it expedient or not that such an union of sentiment on this question in his responsible ministers, was desirable or not, it is not now easy to determine;—without the unavailing hazard of presumptuous conjecture on this

point, it is sufficient to know, that on the avowed declaration of the opponents of this important question, the materials for such an administration did not exist in the country. After several interviews with which Mr. Canning was honoured by the King, the condition which at first seemed to render the execution of the task of forming a Ministry impracticable was removed—full and unfettered permission was given to him to form one—and, on the 12th of April, the suspense, under which the public mind had long been, was terminated by Mr. Wynn moving, in the House of Commons, "that a new writ be issued for the Borough of Newport (Isle of Wight), in consequence of Mr. Canning having accepted the office of First Commissioner of the Treasury." The announcement was received with loud cheers by the House, and the public voice without doors warmly responded to the sentiment of approbation expressed in Parliament.

The appointment of Mr. Canning, after two months deliberation and anxiety, appeared rather to be the commencement than the term of his toil. His situation on his acceptance of office, at this time, may not unaptly be compared to that of a shepherd without a flock; for, within four-and-twenty hours after his appointment to be First Lord of the Treasury, seven of his colleagues, the Duke of Wellington—Lord Eldon—Lord Bathurst—Lord Melville—Lord Bexley—Lord Westmoreland—and Mr. Peel resigned their respective offices. Lord Harrowby—Mr. Huskisson—Mr. Robinson, and Mr. Wynn, remained to co-operate with Mr. Canning in carrying on the business of the country, and re-constructing the seceding portion of the administration. This embarrassment was attended by one mitigatory circumstance, it occurred on the eve of the Easter recess, so that the interval of a fortnight was afforded to Mr. Canning to supply the places that had been vacated, and to complete the necessary arrangements for the formation of an Executive Government. Of this period of customary suspension from public business, ample and advantageous use was made;—negociations

were opened between the Prime Minister and the leading members of the opposition. It is a matter of little moment to ascertain at whose suggestion these negociations originated. The daily approximation in principle between Mr. Canning and the opposition, in almost all measures relating to the commercial, internal, and foreign policy of the country, rendered the formation of a league of friendship and co-operation a task, or indeed, a duty of consistent, and of easy performance. During the fortnight of the Parliamentary recess, Lord Lansdowne had frequent interviews with Mr. Canning. He was also visited by the Duke of Devonshire, the Duke of Portland, Lord Carlisle, Lord Holland, Mr. Brougham, Sir. F. Burdett, Sir James Mackintosh, and many other distinguished members of both Houses of Parliament.

"Beneath his banner, proud to stand,
Look'd up the noblest of the land."

At length Parliament met;—at its meeting most of the vacancies in the administration were filled up;—some of the places, however, it was understood, were only occupied provisionally. The explanations of Mr. Canning and of Mr. Peel, on the difficulties which had obstructed the formation of a new ministry, and on the breaking up of the former one, excited great attention in the House, and throughout the country. The explanations of both were full, satisfactory, and explicit. Mr. Peel vindicated his conduct in a manner which entitle his motives to the favourable appreciation which they received from Parliament and the country. He declared, that the course which he had adopted, was taken without concert—that it was adopted immediately consequent upon his having received the intimation of Mr. Canning's appointment to the Premiership—and that he had previously apprised Mr. Canning that, in the event of that appointment, he would resign. Mr. Peel further justified the propriety of his resignation by the consideration how much would be gained to the Catholic Question from the Prime

Ministers being favourable to it. Mr. Peel, therefore, did not conceive that he, who had always been strenuously opposed to it, could consistently accept office under such a minister, more particularly, as he had always hitherto acted under a Prime Minister, who earnestly co-operated with him in his opposition to that measure. This consideration, and a reference to the peculiar situation held by Mr. Peel, that of Secretary of State for the Home Department, and its relation to the office of Prime Minister, constituted the principal grounds on which he felt it to be his duty to retire from office at this period. Mr. Canning spoke so eloquently for himself, that a reference to his speech, and an earnest recommendation of its attentive perusal, supersede the expediency of a single remark here upon it. The discussions of both houses, after the recess, were marked by much vehemence on both sides; and, on the part of some members of the new opposition, a personal dislike to the Prime Minister was manifested, the unfairness of which presented a contrast to the tone of forbearance which characterised the speeches of the Premier. On a few occasions, however, excited into warmth by observations calculated to thwart him unfairly, and to throw unnecessary obstructions in his way, he replied with much animation, and showed that the spirit and boldness of the assailed were more than a match for those of the assailant.

As soon as the exasperations of party permitted the House to resume its attention to the business of the country, Mr. Canning gave notice of his intention to move for a Committee of Finance in the next session of Parliament;—a patriotic purpose, of which death bereaved him the glory of the fulfilment. This committee was proposed to be formed on the most liberal and extensive basis, including members of all parties.—About this time—and indeed throughout the whole session, night after night, numerous petitions were laid upon the table of the House, praying for a repeal of the "Test and Corporation Acts." The friends of the repeal postponed the discussion of the subject

until the next session of Parliament, owing to the embarrassments in which the Government and the country were placed by the changes in administration. To questions, from members of the opposition, as to the manner in which Mr. Canning would act on this question, and on the question of Parliamentary Reform, to both of which many members, who now supported him, were favourable, Mr. Canning replied, "That he would oppose Parliamentary Reform, as he had always done, and that he would also oppose the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts." He added, "That the support, which he received from some members (the late opposition), was free and unrestrained by any compromise of opinion, on questions on which they had formerly dissented." As Mr. Canning, on this occasion, briefly alluded to the grounds of his opposition to the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, it may be suitable to introduce here the grounds of his opposition to it, in a speech on the Catholic Question, in 1810, in which his opinion, on that important subject, is more fully expressed, than in his brief allusion to it in the session of 1827.

"'Then,' says my honourable friend (Mr. Bankes), 'and he thinks he has me in a dilemma, 'what will you do with the Test Act?' If I answer, 'nothing:' then, I suppose he anticipates exclamations against my inconsistency: if I say, 'repeal it,' then what alarm for the Church? But I am not daunted by either of these opposite difficulties. I answer distinctly thus:—the temper and practice of the British Constitution is to redress practical grievance, but not to run after theoretical perfection. It loves to set the subjects of the realm at ease in point of conscience, and it abhors practical oppression; but it cares little whether the theory of every part of its system squares exactly with that of every other part. Now, if a motion were made to-morrow, for the repeal of the Test Act, my first inquiry would be, 'Is there any practical grievance resulting from its existence?'—My second, 'Is there any considerable or certain evil to be apprehended from making the change?'

"And if the answer to the first of these questions should be in the negative, and to the second in the affirmative, I should not then be tempted to incur the certain hazard, for the sake, not of doing a good, but of curing an unsightliness or an anomaly. Prove to me, that neither the Roman Catholic nor the State suffer any detriment from the laws now in being; and it is not their mere harsh sound, or their mere deformity in the page of our Statute Book, that should induce me to urge their repeal, against the feelings of many worthy and excellent men. Prove to me that the dissenters do practically suffer great inconvenience and injustice, and it is not the mere name of the Test Act that should stand in the way of their relief. But I would not wantonly offend even the prejudices of the Church; nor would I wish the great practical good which I think I may obtain, for the sake of doing every thing upon system. Limitation, exception, qualification, compromise, are not peculiar to this business; they enter into all the business of human life; they control and modify all human transactions. To do the greatest possible good with the least possible harm is, after all our endeavours, the nearest approach that we can hope to make towards perfection. Let us, therefore, go into the Committee, with a sincere disposition to do all in our power to conciliate our Catholic fellow-subjects, without sacrificing to their interest, the interest of other portions of the community; with a view not to partial kindness, but to public good. It would be, indeed, quite visionary to expect, that we should meet with no obstruction in our progress, from feelings in various quarters which cannot, perhaps, be entirely satisfied, from conflicting opinions which can neither be wholly admitted, nor wholly set aside. We must do the best we can; and I have little fear of any serious impediment from differences upon detail, provided the vote of this night shall establish the general principle of the measure."

The Bill for amending the Corn Laws, which was introduced by Mr. Canning, though its provisions were pre-

pared under the special superintendence of Lord Liverpool, and it was really the measure of that noble lord; was the question which the opposition to the new administration chiefly selected for the display of its strength. This measure, though the opposition to it was successful in the House of Lords, was not a very judiciously selected one as an experiment to try the ascendancy of party;—for, besides the unpopularity which must ever attend an opposition to the cheapening of that commodity which furnishes the principal ingredient of the people's sustenance, the ministers who retired were, in plain consistency, no less bound than those who remained, to defend a measure which was brought forward with the joint authority of both. The retired ministers, moreover, supported it until the period of their retirement, and the nation was not disposed to regard very favourably that lynx-eyed vigilance, which forbore to exercise the acuteness of its discernment in detecting defects, which were wholly imperceptible to these same persons in their capacity of Cabinet councillors, when it was more their duty to be observant and critical. This opposition was confined to the House of Lords, and was excused on an alleged misconception of a note of Mr. Huskisson by the Duke of Wellington. The erroneous impression, which was supposed to have been made on the mind of the Duke of Wellington, was explained by a subsequent and fully explanatory note of Mr. Huskisson. The opposition was, nevertheless, persevered in—an amendment, which defeated the *principle* of the measure, was moved and carried in the House of Lords by his grace, and accordingly the Corn Bill, to which the country had been taught to look forward with so much anxiety, for this session, failed.

In the House of Commons, Mr. Canning boldly and repeatedly challenged his adversaries, but in vain, to bring forward some specific proposition on which the sense of Parliament might be unequivocally pronounced, as to the efficiency of the present administration. He dared his adversaries to open conflict, but they declined it. They pre-

ferred a species of Guerilla warfare, teazing attacks—sudden sallies—and quick retreats. They imitated, in their mode of warfare, the extremes of conduct adopted by the Roman consuls, Terentius Varro, and Fabius Maximus, the former of whom boastingly sought to provoke the Carthaginian general to open conflict, whilst the latter cautiously strove to shrink from it.

With respect to the further opposition offered to Mr. Canning's administration, the following sentiments are fully adopted by the writer of this Essay, from an admirable article on the "State of Parties," in the Edinburgh Review, for October, 1827. — "We love not to dwell on painful recollections. We are willing to hope that calmer reflections may render the retrospect for ever as unnecessary as it is unpleasing. In a very short time, the attacks upon the new ministry were left in the hands of those, of whom, wishing to speak with all possible respect, we may be permitted to say, that their weight in the country, and the place they occupy in its councils, are proportioned to their intrinsic merits; and that their adversaries must always feel contentment, if they should feel little pride, in being opposed to their hostility."

The truth and reasonableness of these remarks are obvious to all who had an opportunity of witnessing the proceedings of Parliament towards the close of the session of 1827. It cannot be denied, however, that the opposition, such as it was, had a greater effect on the mind of Mr. Canning, than, from its intrinsic force either in intelligence or power of any description, it was entitled to produce. Naturally sensitive, the personal dislike, one might almost say, personal rancour, displayed towards him by some of his opponents—the aspersions of jealous and of envious men, who decried an excellence which they could not emulate, united with the weakness incurred by frequent relapses of severe illness, and the overwhelming pressure of public business, aggravated his susceptibility to irascible excitement. His ardent mind impelled him to exertions beyond

his strength, and these exertions were rapidly destroying the springs of life.*

The last political act of which Mr. Canning was the chief promoter, was the treaty of London, signed on the 6th of July, combining England, France, and Russia, in a determination to protect the trampled down Christians of Greece from the merciless oppression of the Ottoman power;—an act worthy the descending glory of "that brilliant luminary, which, whether its dawn was clouded, or its meridian splendour obscured, had held a course glorious for the country, and worthy to call forth its admiration and gratitude."

This Essay now approaches the sad period of the close of Mr. Canning's life. A lively curiosity generally prevails to know something of the last moments of great men;—a curiosity which may be presumed to arise from a natural anxiety to ascertain how persons, whom we readily admit to be our superiors in intellectual endowments, pass through a scene in which we all in turn will be called to act our part. Very little of interesting information can be communicated upon this subject, as relates to the last moments of Mr. Canning; for his last illness set in from its commencement with such severity and acuteness as to overpower the vigour of his understanding. For several months previous to his death, his fine countenance was sicklied over with a pallid hue, and his fine form was bent as if under premature age.

The subjoined narrative of the circumstances of his death may be regarded as accurate and authentic.

On Wednesday, the 11th of July, Mr. Canning went to Wimbledon to a Cabinet dinner, at the Lord Chancellor's,

* Mr. Gladstone, in a speech delivered at Liverpool, expressed his opinion that the death of Mr. Canning had been accelerated by the anxieties which beset him, after accepting the Premiership. In a letter addressed to him, by Mr. Canning, on the 28th of May, he wrote as follows—"My occupations, for the twenty-four hours, are, and have been, for the last two months, more almost than either the compass of that time, or my physical strength is adequate to."

where, having made himself warm with exercise, he sat for some time under a tree in the open air. The next day he complained of a slight feeling of rheumatism, but it was not till the following Saturday, that it became so serious as to make him keep his bed. He was confined there for nearly a week, but on Friday, the 20th, was sufficiently recovered to be enabled to go to the Duke of Devonshire's villa, at Chiswick, which the duke had lent to him for change of air. From that time to the 1st of August, though he was well enough to come occasionally to his residence in London, and to ride out, yet he made little progress towards recovery. On the 30th of July he paid his last visit to His Majesty, and on the 31st, he came, for the last time, to town, and transacted business for a few hours with several official gentlemen. On his return to Chiswick that evening, he dined in company with some friends, and retired early to his bed, from which he was destined never again to rise. On the 2d and 3rd he was in very cheerful spirits, and on the evening of the latter day he transacted business with Mr. Herries for three hours. It was about two hours after that gentleman had left him, that he was seized with excruciating pains in the side, which gave the first striking indications to those around him of his alarming condition. Two hours afterwards the medical gentlemen arrived, and he was bled largely. From that time till his death his sufferings were, with few intermissions, so acute, that he could hardly be said to be in the full possession of his faculties. He was, however, at times, tolerably, if not entirely collected; and at those times, as well as in his wanderings, he expressed concern at the inconvenience which his illness might occasion to the business of Government, and gave frequent indications that his King and Country anxiously occupied his thoughts. On the Sunday before his death, he remembered the day, and expressed a wish that his daughter should read prayers to him—(a duty which he himself, in his busiest moments, never omitted to perform to his whole household, whenever he was prevented from going to church:)—but a

few minutes after he had expressed this wish, the pain, which had for a time partially subsided, returned with great violence, and with it returned likewise the wanderings of his mind. In the course of the evening of this day, on some religious observation being made by one of the attendants, he declared "his hope of salvation through the merits of his Redeemer, Jesus Christ." The two last days, his strength and his pain diminished in like proportion, and, having been senseless for some hours, he breathed his last, without a groan, a little before four o'clock on the morning of the 8th of August.

The family which Mr. Canning has left to deplore a loss, in which their sorrows share the sympathy of the nation, consist of his widow,* to whom he had been united in most affectionate endearment for twenty-eight years; a daughter, married to the Marquis of Clanricarde in 1825; and two sons, one a commander in the navy, and the other a student at Eton.

The funeral obsequies of Mr. Canning, which took place on the 16th of August, were assimilated to those of a private gentleman. As the writer of this Essay had the mournful consolation to be present on this occasion, he will transcribe here (with such trivial alterations as the different nature of the present publication may suggest to him to be suitable) what he has elsewhere written, when the impression of this sad ceremonial was fresh upon his mind.

The day was peculiarly unfavourable, yet the crowd of persons, anxious to demonstrate their respect for the memory of the departed Statesman, was immense. The streets leading from Downing Street, from the late residence of Mr. Canning, were thronged by a dense assemblage of persons habited suitably to the melancholy occasion. At one o'clock the funeral procession departed from Downing Street. The hearse, drawn by six horses, and

* Mrs. Canning has been recently raised to the peerage by the title of Viscountess Canning.

preceded by a marshal, mutes, and pursuivants, were followed by nine mourning coaches, each drawn by four horses; the private carriages of the Cabinet ministers, and the friends of the deceased Premier closed the *cortegè*. Mr. Charles Canning, a youth of fourteen years of age, was the chief mourner. Their Royal Highnesses the Dukes of Clarence and Sussex attended to pay their last mark of mournful respect to the minister. The Cabinet ministers, who principally occupied the mourning coaches, also attended as mourners—with the exception of his attached friend, Mr. Huskisson, who was absent at the time in a distant part of the continent, and Lord Harrowby, who was in Devonshire, and sent an apology for his absence. The other mourners were, the Marquis of Clanricarde, Captain Hunn, Mr. Stapleton (Mr. Canning's private Secretary), the Duke of Devonshire, the Marquis of Conyngham, Lord Seaford, Lord Morley, Lord Howard de Walden, Lord George Bentinck, Mr. Planta, Mr. Denison, Mr. Backhouse, Sir M. Tierney, Dr. Holland, and the other medical attendants of Mr. Canning. The funeral train was received at the entrance to the Abbey by Dr. Ireland, the Dean of Westminster; a numerous body of political and private friends, who were provided with tickets, formed into two lines along the great aisle, through which the procession passed on its way to the north transept. As soon as the procession reached the place of sepulture, the Foreign ambassadors, the Cabinet ministers, and other mourners, formed a circle round the coffin, whilst the Reverend Dean of Westminster read impressively the burial service.

It was a truly affecting spectacle to watch and witness the deep expression of sorrow, which was settled on the countenances of all who encompassed the grave at this moment of mournful interest. It was not the mockery of woe—it was not the outward expression of unfelt regret—it was not an ostentatious grief;—but the most noble, and the most estimable men in the land, were seen marshalled in unaffected

and reverential sorrow around the mortal remains of the most illustrious statesman of modern times. The mourners—the ministers—the Foreign ambassadors—and, indeed, all (with scarcely an exception) who joined in the procession, were suffused in tears. There was scarcely one among the numerous throng by whom the illustrious deceased was not remembered by some endearing recollection of relationship, of friendship, of service, or of kindness.

The whole ceremony was of the simplest character. There was nothing about it which, to the eye of a stranger, would indicate that the minister of a mighty empire was now consigned to the earth. The greatest and mightiest in the land were present; but they seemed to have appropriately divested themselves of the attributes and appearances of rank and nobility, and become, for the time, undistinguished from their fellow-citizens. The vault in which Mr. Canning lies is very narrow, and is barely sufficient for the coffin. It is about seven feet long, in breadth two feet and a half, and in depth nearly eight. The site it occupies in the north transept is precisely at the foot of the grave of Mr. Pitt, from which it is only separated by a slight partition of about nine inches.

The procession left the Abbey in nearly the same order which it had observed on entering it. If there was any appearance, worthy of notice, it was only discoverable in the augmented expressions of grief depicted in the countenances of those who composed it. The hearts of the thronged assemblage, both within and without the Abbey, beat as though they were the heart of an individual man;—all who had been admitted to the acquaintance of Mr. Canning, grieved for one, who, in his social habits and intercourse with the world, was frank, generous, and conciliating;—those who were admitted to his closer intimacies, mourned him who was ever found a firm, attached, and devoted friend;—the members of his family grieved for the man who was endeared to his domestic circle by the duties and attachments of a

fond relation. His country deplored the loss of a Patriot and a

"Statesman—yet friend to truth, of soul sincere,
In action faithful, and in honour clear;
Who broke no promise—serve l no private end,
Who gain'd no title, and who lost no friend,
Ennobled by himself."—

He has now passed from this earthly scene, and is removed to that upper sphere, in which the great actors in human affairs are, as it were, "associated in a world of their own," and from whence they look down, as from an eminence, shedding the light of their example and their wisdom for the guidance and consolation of mankind. Vain and unavailing as tributes of this kind may be to the dead, yet it is a melancholy gratification of the best of our feelings, to record the merits and the virtues of those who deserve an honoured estimation in their own age, and an honoured remembrance in the next. Of that order of our species, whose actions "give the world assurance of a man," was Mr. Canning. Had his life been protracted to a longer span, even until he had witnessed the realization of all the schemes of that policy, the shiboleth of which, he declared to be British honour and British interest, he could not have gathered to himself a richer harvest of renown, than that which surrounded him at the close of a life, which, like that of Agricola, united in one tribute of universal sorrow, the griefs of his family, of his friends, of his country, and of the world. "*Finis vitæ nobis luctuosus, amicis tristis, extraneis etiam ignotisque non sine curâ fuit.*"*

The following beautiful poetical effusion (written on the morning of Mr. Canning's funeral), is from the pen of Mr. Croker.

"NON OMNIS MORIAR."

Farewell, bright spirit! brightest of the bright!
Concentrate blaze of intellectual light!

* Tacitus Vita Agricolæ, cap. 43

Who should, alone, or in the first degree,
Unite so apt, such rich variety
Taste, guiding mirth, and sport, enlivening sense,
Wit, wisdom, poetry, and eloquence,
Profound and playful, amiable and great;
And first in social life, as in the state?
Not wholly lost!—thy letter'd fame shall tell
A part of what thou wast. Farewell! Farewell!

Farewell, great Statesman! whose elastic mind
Clung round thy country, yet embraced mankind;
Who, in the most appalling storms, when power
Shook the wide world, wast equal to the hour,
Champion of measured liberty, whence springs
The mutual strength of people and of kings,
'Twas thine, like CHATHAM'S patriot task, to wield
The people's force, yet be the monarch's shield.
Not wholly lost!—for both the worlds shall tell
Thy history in theirs. Farewell! Farewell!

Farewell, dear Friend! in all relations dear,
In all we love, or honour, or revere;
Son, husband, father, master, patron, friend;
What varied grief and gratitude we blend!
We, who beheld, when pain's convulsive start
Disturb'd the frame, it could not change the heart;
We, whose deep pangs to soften and console,
Were the last efforts of thy flying soul.
Not wholly lost!—our faith and feelings tell
That we shall meet again. Farewell! Farewell!

Thus has the tomb closed upon all that remained of one, whose intelligence was the brightest—whose voice was the

* Shortly after the death of Mr. Canning, the following announcement of a subscription for erecting a monument in honour of his memory, appeared in the public journals. The subscription has already reached 9,000*l.*

"The noblemen and gentlemen whose names are undersigned, desiring to testify their profound regret for the loss of Mr. Canning, their admiration of his talents, and their respect and regard for his memory, and having reason to believe that the like sentiments prevail generally throughout the united kingdom, have undertaken to superintend the opening of a subscription for erecting a monument

most eloquent. Death, it has been said, knocks impartially at the palaces of the great, and the cottages of the poor; but there are occasions when it would seem the grave had chosen its victim in the highest place, and in the hour of most auspicious promise—as if to command more implicitly the homage of mankind. Mr. Canning died when he had reached his meridian elevation—without yet shining forth in meridian lustre—whilst the eyes and hopes of his country, and of the world, were directed to him. In spite of the reluctance of men to be just to the living, and especially to living statesmen, it was Mr. Canning's fortune, in his life, to "win golden

to his memory. To this demonstration of national feeling they invite the aid of all classes of His Majesty's subjects.

"They propose at the commencement of the ensuing session of Parliament, to solicit a general meeting of the subscribers, for the purpose of adopting such measures as shall be then thought most expedient, and of appointing a committee to carry into effect the common object.

ANGLESEA,	GEO. COCKBURN,
BRISTOL,	G. ABERCROMBIE ROBINSON,
CARLISLE,	J. SCARLETT,
CONYNGHAM,	GEO. WARRENDER,
DEVONSHIRE,	ALEX. BARING,
DUNDAS,	CHAS. BROWNLOW,
GODERICH,	G. AGAR ELLIS,
GOWER,	R. GRANT,
GRENVILLE,	G. HIBBERT,
HARROWBY,	J. G. LAMBTON,
LANSDOWNE,	F. LAWLEY,
LEEDS,	H. T. LIDDELL,
LYNDHURST,	E. J. LITTLETON,
NORFOLK,	CHAS. N. PALLMER,
PORTLAND,	GEO. PHILLIPS,
SANDON,	E. B. PORTMAN,
STAFFORD,	T. SMITH,
WELLESLEY,	C. TENNYSON,
WHARNCLIFFE,	GEORGE G. V. VERNON,
THOS. DYKE ACLAND,	E. BOOTLE WILBRAHAM,
THOS. BARING,	EDWD. WODEHOUSE,

opinions from all sorts of people—with that negative and scarce less decisive testimony to merit—the vilification of the base.

It were idle to speculate upon what would have been, had he lived, his career as a statesman. His position was trying and animating; his prospects perilous and magnificent:—but if the state of England, and the world, demanded a master-spirit in the British minister, Mr. Canning was a master-spirit. Nature, and the happiest discipline, had formed him for the minister of a powerful free people. He had in him that which could sustain its greatness and glory in the scale of nations, and wield its energies in an emergency of novelty, or danger. It has been observed of him, and he avowed, that British interests were the Polar star of his policy; but the interests of his country swayed him in a sense characteristic of our administrative genius at the best periods of our history—in a sense remarked by judging foreigners as one of our happiest national traits, and the main-spring of our national power. A patriot minister—his views were generous and comprehensive as the station of his mind was exalted.—He would secure or raise the power and glory of his country by that maxim, which, if not always acted on, was always professed by the most powerful free people of antiquity—"to protect the oppressed and rebuke the proud." He would maintain the rank and authority of England among nations by cultivating sympathy abroad with elements and principles of the most generous order.

The part taken by him against the French Revolution, in the ardour of youth and freshness of his classical associations, may be supposed a contradiction, and has been so regarded by some. But he reached the summit of popular favour, and his fame, without disavowing one act of his public life, in an age of recantations and apostacies—opinion, therefore, must have vindicated him. And again, at what period of the Revolution did he start in politics? Not in 1787, when the spectacle of the French people, and First National Assembly was

grand and inspiring—but when the terrorism of 1793 *—a tyranny so new and horrible as to have no name till then—covered France with dungeons, scaffolds, and proscriptions.

None more than Mr. Canning identified British interests with British honour. He had the same high sense of national honour as a statesman, which he so constantly proved of personal honour as a gentleman. Was the question, who

† A quotation from Cicero may be permitted here, to prove the coincidence of sentiment, between Mr. Canning (vol. i. p. 272) and the Roman statesman and orator—its application is obvious.

"Sic omnia nimia in contraria fere convertuntur, maximeque in rebus politicis evenit: nimiaque illa libertas et populis et privatis in nimiam servitutem cadit. Itaque ex hac maxima libertate tyrannus gignitur, et illa injustissima et durissima servitus. Ex hoc enim *populo* indomito vel potius immani deligitur aliquis plerumque *dux* contra illos *principes* adflictos jam et depulsos loco, audax, impurus, consectans proterve bene sæpe de republica meritos: cui qui privato sunt oppositi timores, dantur *imperia*, et ea continuantur, præsidiis etiam sæpiuntur; postremo a quibus proiecti sunt, existunt eorum ipsorum tyranni; quos si boni oppresserunt, ut sæpe fit, recreatur civitas."—*De Rep. lib.* 1, *cap.* xliii.

"Excesses generally fall into opposite extremes, and this is doubly true in politics. Thus excessive liberty plunges nations and individuals into excessive slavery. Hence the greatest liberty brings forth a tyrant, and servitude the most unjust and oppressive. For a *people** without restraint, or rather outrageous, choose some person, for the most part *a general*,† to oppose the *aristocracy*,‡ which they have insulted and degraded. This man is at once daring, shameless, and a wanton persecutor of those who have often been well deserving of the state. But as he is individually the object of apprehension, *power*§ is entrusted to him for his protection, this power is subsequently prolonged, and he finally becomes invested with a military despotism. To be brief, he stands forth the tyrant of the very men who raised him to power; should, however, virtuous men unite to put him down, then again the state revives."‖

* The French Republicans.
† Buonaparte.
‡ The French nobility—*emigrés*.
§ Consul—First Consul—Consul for Life—Emperor.
‖ Return of the Bourbons.

should hold a barren island in the Mediterranean? he disdained to treat it as the defence of Egypt and India, which he might have done, and argued the possession only as a point upon which the nation's honour had been staked. It was his opinion frequently expressed, that England's greatness depends upon good faith and character—and that to be safe and happy, she must be *great*. This maxim of the soundest and grandest policy, was urged by him with all the energy of his genius, through every stage and vicissitude of that war so memorably waged against an enemy the most powerful in resources—the ablest in faculty—above all, the most relentless in hatred this country had ever known—one who, combating in the shadows of the pyramids, on the distant plains of Egypt, led his legions to victory, with the cry, that they were there striking at the heart of England, and preparing for her the mortal blow.* Despotism and the spirit of conquest are not buried for ever beyond the waters with Buonaparte. Semi-barbarous pride, with the sentiment of giant force in one quarter—hereditary ambition, religious bigotry, and the dread of freedom—with the vainglory of a martial people—in another—may again disturb the peace, and threaten the independence of Europe. It is then that England and Europe would miss the courage and the councils of one who had, above all men living, the faculty to rally the spirits of the assailed or the oppressed—of him who, in America, "called a new world into existence, to redress the balance of power in the old"—and, it may be added, to redress the balance of freedom—of him who, in Portugal, proved at once British good faith and force—of him who, in Greece, had begun—having time only to begin—the work of rescuing, from a barbarous yoke, the birthplace of the Muses;—a work worthy the glory of a great statesman and free people—unless all that is grand in thought, generous in sentiment, graceful in life—and even

* "Soldats—vous porterez maintenant un coup fatal à l'Angleterre—et il vous facilitera les moyens de lui porter enfin le coup mortel."—*Buonaparte to the army of Egypt.*

humanity itself—shall yield to common ignorance, and grovelling calculation.

If the genius of Mr. Canning promised to his country, respect and force abroad, it held out a no less confident expectation, of new resources and refreshed industry—of advanced knowledge and more enlarged freedom—to her people at home. The common herd is unwilling to allow the same individual more than one supremacy; and plodding mediocrity sometimes avenges itself in this way upon the talent which it cannot contest. Hence the mediocre, and the envious would have it, that because Mr. Canning had the genius to govern England in her relations with other states, and because he was the most accomplished orator of his time—he must therefore be unfit for the more laborious and "practical" matters of government and legislation—as trading industry, general commerce, and finance. His speech on the Bullion Question, so sagacious in its reasoning, so sound in its principles, and so admirable a model of what may be called "the eloquence of the subject," is a sufficient reply. But envious mediocrity and self-complacent dulness should be further told—first, that a man of genius views even this class of subjects more correctly, because he views them as part of a system—and from above; next, that the great difference between talent and mediocrity is, that the one can take in by a *coup d'œil*, what the other could not comprehend in the longest life of plodding and detail.

A certain frankness and fearlessness of spirit, which spurned the common-place traditions of vulgar wisdom—which never depreciated danger, or the enemy, was conspicuous in the character of Mr. Canning as a statesman. There is, in his speech on the Army Estimates, in 1802, a striking instance—and so eloquent, that, even in this sketch of his character, it must be introduced entire:—

"I know not a more solemn or important duty that a member of Parliament can have to discharge, than by giving, at fit seasons, a free opinion upon the character and qualities of public men. Away with the cant of 'measures,

not men!' the idle supposition that it is the harness and not the horses that draw the chariot along! No, Sir, if the comparison must be made, if the distinction must be taken, men are every thing, measures comparatively nothing. I speak, Sir, of times of difficulty and danger; of times when systems are shaken, when precedents and general rules of conduct fail. Then it is, that not to this or that measure, however prudently devised, however blameless in execution, but to the energy and character of individuals, a state must be indebted for its salvation. Then it is that kingdoms rise or fall in proportion as they are upheld, not by well-meant endeavours (laudable though they may be), but by commanding, over-awing talents; by able men. And what is the nature of the times in which we live? Look at France, and see what we have to cope with, and consider what has made her what she is? *A man.* You will tell me that she was great, and powerful, and formidable, before the date of Buonaparte's government; that he found in her great physical and moral resources; that he had but to turn them to account. True, and he did so. Compare the situation in which he found France with that to which he has raised her. I am no panegyrist of Buonaparte; but I cannot shut my eyes to the superiority of his talents, to the amazing ascendant of his genius. Tell me not of his measures, and his policy. It is his genius, his character, that keeps the world in awe. Sir, to meet, to check, to curb, to stand up against him, we want arms of the same kind. I am far from objecting to the large military establishments which are proposed to you. I vote for them with all my heart. But for the purpose of coping with Buonaparte, one great commanding spirit is worth them all."

It has been said of Mr. Canning that he was ambitious —and he was. But his ambition was

"That glorious fault of angels and of gods,"

which is a "glorious" virtue in men. It was the ambition of the Athenian to make his country the first of nations—and be himself the first of his country. If the disin-

genuous warfare of party-debate ever cast upon him imputations of truckling compromise, they were shaken off from his character, "like dew-drops from the lion's mane." The retrospect of his life—his many sacrifices of office to his pride of talent, and delicacy of honour—prove his ambition of high place most disinterested and independent. Without the advantages of noble birth, Parliamentary interest, or private opulence, he yet disdained a conformity with unworthy passions, or a compromise with the domination of great Parliamentary proprietors.

Thus endowed as a statesman, Mr. Canning was the most consummate orator of his country and age. He had cultivated eloquence, as a liberal art—with the zeal of a student—and became one of its classic masters. Some may have exceeded him in particular qualities or powers—but he possessed an assemblage of endowments and acquirements, which left all rivalry at a distance. He combined the free movement, spirit, and reality of British Parliamentary debate, with the elaborate perfection of the *forum* and the *agora*—and the accessary accomplishments and graces of ancient and modern literature. Chatham can be estimated only by tradition and his effects—in the absence of all genuine remains. He must have possessed fervour, fancy, a superior reason, and great popular effect; but he exercised an art which he had himself created—and in which he had no rival of the first rank. His theatric delivery and the mimic lightnings of his eye astonished and frightened country gentlemen and noble lords, to whom eloquence was a novelty, and talent alarming. His dramatic appeal to the "frowning ancestor" in the tapestry, and his pantomimic exhibition of his crutch, would fall powerless—or worse, on a modern opposition. Fox, with the impetuous ardour of liberty, humanity, and his temperament—with the muscular vigour of his dialectics—simple and unadorned—would be the first orator in the assembly of a free people. Pitt, with his high-sounding amplifications, lofty sarcasms, and imposing manner, was

supreme in dictating to a drilled majority or subservient council—and in imposing his authority upon the common order of minds. Burke has bequeathed the eloquence of his meditations, and the oracles of his philosophy, to sages and to posterity.—But give Canning "audience meet"—the select representatives of a civilized free people—men capable of feeling deliberative eloquence as a cultivated liberal art—and he brought into the field an assemblage of qualities beyond all single rivalry. Fire and imagination, like Chatham, with a severer judgment and less artificial delivery—vigorous dialectics, like Fox, with more of wit and fancy—dignity of manner, and measured declamation, like Pitt, with a livelier and lighter tone of pleasantry and sarcasm—much of the philosophy of Burke, with less prolixity, and a more scrupulous taste—these are among the qualities which determine Mr. Canning's place in the first order of orators.

He had studied with a quick and congenial feeling those severe and eternal models—the remains of ancient eloquence. His elegance of expression was fastidious, without weakening its force—his wit was not so elaborately—concentratedly brilliant, as Sheridan's—but it was more prompt, redundant, and disposable—and, if it may be so said, more logical—whilst his ridicule, inimitably poignant, was ever governed by high breeding and his good taste. Mr. Canning's reading was extensive and various, and his fancy flitted over history, fiction, and external nature, with quickness and felicity—for illustration, citation, or metaphor. He had the tact to discern, and the dexterity to expose, what was weak or ridiculous on the adverse side—the art to push an opponent's simile, or analogy, *ad absurdum*—or to discover grandeur in what was meant for reproach (as in his retort that Proteus, with the versatility of his shapes, was in every shape the god)—and, in fine, to lay bare, by rigorous syllogism, a fallacy in the envelope of a sophism, or loose phrase.—Who has ever reached him in those clever movements, and happy inspirations, which stamp the talent of debate?

Mr. Canning not only meditated his speeches, but com-

posed carefully (whether on paper or in his memory matters not) the passages of effect. His exquisite sense of the elegance of style—of the precise value of words—and of oratorical collocation and cadence—will be felt and admired in the speeches revised by him—and discerned in those that remain in a state less perfect. His printed speeches present the orator with more interest and fidelity, than any other published speeches, excepting Burke's, who wrote his for the press—fortunately for posterity and his own fame. Mr. Canning, however, will not be found always equal to himself; but as it is the condition of mediocrity not to exceed—and its privilege not to descend below itself—so inequality is the attribute of genius—from the father of poetry and eloquence down to this day.

Person and delivery are considerable parts of the orator. Mr. Canning's height was of the heroic standard—his form united elegance and strength—his dress was modern, without pomp or foppery—his motions and pace firm and elastic—with a characteristic, individualising disregard of all studied grace. His countenance was moulded in the happiest English style—comely, elegant, and simple—the profile gracefully, rather than strongly, defined—the face expressive, and mantling, as he spoke, with the changes of sentiment and emotion—the eye large and full, and if not charged with the lightning's flash, yet beaming with intelligence—the voice strong, flexible, and slightly muffled, so as to impart a softer melody, without affecting its clearness. His port, as he spoke, was sometimes negligent—often admirable—evincing a proud consciousness of the superiority of his cause, or the power of his eloquence. His action in one respect was objectionable—he wielded his arms alternately and vehemently, without variety or grace, and spoke occasionally with his arms crossed. The first of living portrait-painters* has represented him in a frock coat, with his arms crossed, on the floor of Parliament. But though

* Sir Thomas Lawrence.

the likeness is perfect, the portrait wants historic attitude, aspect, and expression. The artist took the orator who could launch an epigram or a retort—when he might have gone so much higher. Possibly, this negligent action of Mr. Canning was indulged in to avoid the theatricalism of manner with which Lord Chatham was reproached—and which betrayed, too palpably, art and preparation in Sheridan. It had the effect, too, of giving an air of unpremeditated inspiration to his most calculated strokes, and passages of most elaborate splendour. But his delivery, on the whole, was at all times effective, and, with the occasion, impassioned and electrical.

With the sensibility of his temperament, and his order of mind, Mr. Canning must have possessed pathetic power. But the exercise of this is scarcely within the range of the eloquence of Parliament. His sensibility, joined with his delicate sense of personal honour, rendered him impatient, sometimes, of petty outrages in debate—and so gross in their injustice, as to recoil upon their authors—but let them be forgotten.

Had Mr. Canning devoted himself to literature, that of his country must have been adorned by him. In prose, his early compositions, and some unavowed pieces in the maturity of his talent, are worthy of his fame;—his state papers remain models in their kind. His pieces, in verse, indicate a resemblance to the genius of Pope. He would have excelled, like that illustrious poet, in polished diction, keen satire, and strong traits of ridicule and character. He would have equalled Pope in elegiac pathos, and surpassed him in lyric spirit. But the tomb has closed, in its darkness and silence, on the WIT, ORATOR, PATRIOT, AND STATESMAN.

SPEECHES,

&c. &c.

TREATY WITH THE KING OF SARDINIA.

JANUARY 31st, 1794.

The following is a List of the Administration at this Period.

President of the Council.....	Earl Camden.
Lord Chancellor	Lord Loughborough.
Lord Privy Seal	Earl Gower.
Home Department	Rt. Hon. Henry Dundas, (afterwards Viscount Melville.)
Foreign Department	Lord Grenville.
First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer	Right Hon. William Pitt.
Master of the Rolls.....	Sir Richard Pepper Arden, (afterwards Lord Alvanley.)
Attorney General	Sir John Scott, (afterwards Lord Eldon.)
Solicitor General.....	Sir John Mitford, (afterwards Lord Redesdale.)
Secretary at War.....	Sir George Young.

THE first, or (as it is usually termed) the maiden speech of Mr. Canning, in the House of Commons, was delivered in the debate on the motion of Mr. Pitt, "that the copy of the treaty with the King of Sardinia, be referred to the committee of supply." By this treaty, the King of Sardinia engaged to keep on foot, during the whole course of the present war with France, an army of fifty thousand men, to be employed for the defence of his dominions, as well as to act against the common enemy. On the part of His Britannic Majesty, it was stipulated that he should furnish to the King of Sardinia, during the whole course of the war, a subsidy of two hundred thousand pounds sterling per annum. The treaty further bound the King of England, not to conclude a peace with the common enemy, without comprehending in it the entire restitution to His Sardinian Majesty, of all the parts of his dominions, which belonged to him at the commencement of the war. In return, the King of Sardinia was bound to continue firmly and inseparably attached to the common cause, and to the interests of the King of England in this war, until the conclusion of peace between Great Britain and France.

MR. FOX opposed the motion. He conceived it to be very unwise to enter into such a treaty, by which we were to receive nothing, and give every thing. The engagement was a hazardous one, and we had nothing stipulated in our favour, that might be regarded as an equivalent. By this treaty, the King of Sardinia was only bound to maintain fifty thousand men, for the defence of his own territories. That

the King of Sardinia should keep up such a force, what did we engage to perform? Not only to pay a subsidy of two hundred thousand pounds a year, in aid of maintaining this force, but to restore to him all those territories which the French had wrested from him whilst we were sitting quietly by, boasting of our neutrality. This engagement might reduce us to purchase peace at great sacrifices on our part, in order to make good our engagements with the King of Sardinia, or to subject ourselves to the reproach of a breach of faith, by making peace without obtaining the restoration of his territories. He must peremptorily deny the doctrine, that the treaty being concluded by His Majesty, the proper representative of the country, in all transactions with foreign powers, the House could not refuse to ratify it, without subjecting themselves to the imputation of a breach of faith. If the House was considered as bound to make good every treaty, which by the advice of his ministers he might think proper to conclude, there was a complete surrender of the public purse to the executive power.

Mr. Powys replied to Mr. Fox. He said it was natural for the right honourable gentleman, and those who, like him, opposed the principle of the war, to oppose every measure that could contribute to its success.

Mr. Ryder supported the motion.

Mr. Grey did not consider the treaty, as one calculated to give energy to the war. No former treaty had been entered into, under circumstances nearly similar; and in

his opinion, the epithet "*unprecedented*," as well as the epithets, "absurd and iniquitous," might be justly applied to it. At least, he must hear many more circumstances than had as yet been stated, before he could think that they might not.

MR. CANNING rose, and spoke to the following effect:

Sir,

If I could agree with the honourable gentleman who has just sat down, in considering the question before the House as an insulated and independent question, standing on its own grounds, and to be argued solely on its own principles, I should have sat by contented, while gentlemen, more qualified for such a task, by their opportunities of official information, and by their ability every way greater than mine, had given their answer to the objections urged against the treaty.

I should have sat by, contented with what has already been said by a right honourable gentleman below me, (Mr. Ryder,) who has given to all the objections which have yet been urged, an ample and able, and, to my mind, satisfactory answer.

But as I do much rather agree with the honourable gentleman who has spoken second in the

debate, that the question now agitating, is not to be argued on the narrow principle of mercantile precision: that it is not simply an accurate tradesman-like inquiry into the goodness or badness of the bargain which we have made; an inquiry whether we have actually received a fair *quid pro quo;* whether or not we have not been somewhat extravagant in our payment, and suffered ourselves to be over-reached in the transaction; but that it is a great and important question, growing out of, and inseparable from, a great, connected, and comprehensive system—the system of general union among the powers of Europe, which has for its ultimate object to prevent the aggrandizement of the French Republic, and to check the principles by which that aggrandizement is sought to be effectuated: and as upon the whole of that system, and upon the treaty before the House, as part of that system, I cannot conceive how any gentleman should have found much difficulty in forming his opinion; so I trust, that if I attempt to deliver that which I have formed, I shall stand excused from the charge of presumption.

I know but two points, in which the propriety of this, or indeed of any other treaty, can be attacked, or need to be defended. 1st, It might be argued, that no such treaty ought to have been made at all. 2ndly, Being acknowledged to

have been proper to be made, it may be contended to be more disadvantageous than any other treaty that had ever been made between the same parties; and that in one of two ways,—either by showing that we had paid a greater price for the alliance, having only an equal necessity for it; or by showing that we paid an equal price for it, having a less necessity. The question is thus to be argued in two different points of view. It is to be first shown that some treaty with the King of Sardinia was proper; and if that inquiry should terminate in the affirmative, it will then be my business to contend, in the second place, that this treaty is equally advantageous, as well as beyond comparison more necessary than any that has been heretofore concluded between the two states. The discussion of the first general question is easy, as there can be no doubt of the propriety of an alliance between two powers engaged in the same interest, provoked by the same enormities, and contending with the same enemy. Without longer dwelling upon this branch of the subject, I shall therefore proceed to the next topic of investigation.

The honourable gentleman who has preceded me, has endeavoured to show, that the precedents cited by the gentlemen on this side of the House, differed both in their nature and circumstances from the present treaty. This part of the subject

has been already so amply discussed, that I will add nothing to it; and therefore, without staying to examine the validity of his remarks, I will produce an instance of an alliance with another continental power, which will be found to tally in almost every particular. I mean the subsidy-treaty with the late King of Prussia in 1759. The objections brought by the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Fox) against the present treaty; the points wherein he states it to differ for the worse, from every other treaty, which we have ever formed with the same, or any other power, are these:—that the King of Sardinia, at the time of our giving him the subsidy, was actually engaged in a war with France; and that there was no necessity, therefore, for us to have subsidized him, to make him go to war; that the only condition that we expected from him in return for our subsidy was, the defence of his own dominions; and that for this, in addition to the subsidy, we guaranteed to him, not the possession only of that part of his dominions of which he was still possessed, but the restitution of Savoy, the possession of which had actually been taken from him. With every one of these circumstances, do the circumstances of the subsidy-treaty with the King of Prussia in 1758 exactly tally. The King of Prussia was then in a state of actual war with all the great continental

powers: he was actually out of possession of considerable part of his dominions, and nearly overwhelmed by the immense force employed against him. And did this country treat him as the right honourable gentleman would now wish us to treat the King of Sardinia? No! it was precisely on these principles, stated clearly and at large in the preamble of that treaty, because he was oppressed by powerful enemies, because he was out of possession of part of his dominions, and because he was so exhausted as to be incapable by himself of defending the remainder, that we were induced to aid him; an annual subsidy of £670,000 was cheerfully and unanimously voted him; was carried triumphantly through this House, with the loudest approbation of the country.

And to him, too, as now to the King of Sardinia, we guaranteed the restitution of those dominions, of which he had been deprived. The difference, therefore, between these two cases lay only in this: that the subsidy granted to the King of Prussia was £400,000 larger than that now granted to the King of Sardinia; and that the necessity for subsidizing the King of Sardinia now, is (in my mind at least) ten thousand times more urgent than that for granting the subsidy to the King of Prussia. For, on what principle could that vote be justified to the people, who were to pay it? On

the wish which the then servants of the crown entertained to preserve the balance of power in Europe. But how much stronger are the reasons which the ministry of this day might urge in defence of the present measure! They might with confidence tell the nation, "We require this money, not to support a precarious or ideal balance of power, but to enable us to defend your government, your property, and your lives, against an enemy who is waging a war for your utter extermination! A nation already too powerful, has, by what some are pleased to call a political regeneration, attained to a degree of strength which threatens the subversion of all the existing forms of social union. To avert this catastrophe, the accession of Sardinia is requisite; and she can give effectual aid in so doing."

A noble lord (Wycomb), on the first night of the session, avowed, that he conceived the opinions and practices now prevalent in France to be the beginning of a new system of political principles and conduct throughout Europe. If it be true, indeed, that old principles are giving way so fast, I confess that the notion of the balance of power, does not appear to me to have been so very clearly explained, or so generally understood, as that the people of England would cling by it after abandoning all their other prejudices and prepossessions; or that the poor peasantry, who have been represented this

night as having their hard-earned pittance cruelly wrung from them, to furnish the subsidy for the King of Sardinia, would be better pleased to part with it for the support of the balance of power, than in aid of an ally, engaged in common with themselves for the safety, the laws, the religion, and the liberty of mankind. I cannot, therefore, conceive on what principle any gentleman can argue the present treaty to be disadvantageous, in comparison with that of 1758-9, unless, indeed, it be, that, as it seems to be, the opinion of gentlemen opposite, that the Earl of Yarmouth discharged his embassy to the court of Prussia, so much better for being unpaid, so they might possibly think that the King of Sardinia would fight better if we refused to pay him.

The right honourable gentleman opposite,* (and here I beg to be understood, that when I presume to notice such arguments as I think exceptionable, when they come even from such authority, I do not do so with any intention of behaving to that right honourable gentleman in any other manner than such as might evince what I really feel, the sincerest admiration for his talents, and respect and esteem for his person)—that right honourable gentleman does indeed seem to entertain some such opinion; for he has argued almost as if he thought that the subsidy was a drawback

* Mr. Fox.

upon the exertions of the King of Sardinia ; that he had been well enough disposed at first, both by interest and inclination, to carry on the war with vigour ; but that, impose upon him a subsidy, and all his vigour was instantly overwhelmed and extinguished. Nay, the right honourable gentleman went still farther, and proposed that the King of Sardinia, not only should have received nothing at our hands, but that because he happens to be the sovereign of a territory, whose revenues are insufficient to support an adequate military force, we who are wealthy ought to insist upon his subsidizing us ; that he should not only fight on by himself, but pay us for looking at him. Till I can subscribe to this doctrine, I shall continue to think that, under the circumstances in which the King of Sardinia stands, it is essentially necessary that we should assist him ; and that it is not proposed that our assistance should be afforded to him in a more ample manner than the necessity requires.

With regard to the question which I have at first passed over, the objections to the treaty *in toto*, as if it ought never to have been made, all these objections would ultimately resolve themselves into such as have been urged against the war in general. As I have not yet enjoyed any opportunity of declaring my sentiments upon this subject, I will, if consistent with the rules of the House,

offer a few remarks upon it before I sit down, conceiving it to be natural and necessary that I should declare my reasons for approving the commencement of a war which I am supporting in detail, and of which I applaud the continuance and vigorous prosecution.

The war, then, Sir, I cannot consider in any other light, than as a war into which we have been forced by unprovoked aggressions on the part of France; nor can I see, as some gentlemen are disposed to do, that these aggressions are the less to be resisted and repelled, on account of the principles by which they are sought to be justified. Distinctions, indeed, have been taken by gentlemen on the other side of the House, between the progress of the arms of France and the progress of her principles. The progress of her arms, it is admitted, it has been, and will always be, our right and our policy to oppose; but we need not, and we ought not, it seems, to go to war against her principles. I, for my part, cannot see such nice distinctions. Admitting that the aggrandizement and aggression of France, must naturally be the objects of our jealousy and resistance, I cannot understand that they become less so, in proportion as they are accompanied and promoted by principles destructive of civil society. I can conceive no reason why the sword, which, if it had been attempted to be drawn by the ancient monarchy of

France would have been represented as threatening our prosperity, our rights, our very existence, may be wielded with tenfold force by the arm of republicanism; may be pointed even at our breasts, without endangering our safety or our honour.

But not only is this a war against principles, but against the very best of principles, a war against freedom. This is loudly and confidently asserted, and is to be proved, we are told, from the circumstance of ministers having neglected to interfere concerning the partition of Poland. Had not ministers been actuated by a hatred of liberty on the one hand, and restrained by a love of despotism on the other, they could never have chosen to make war against France, rather than against the powers who had partitioned Poland. The authors of this assertion affect to disregard, or disdain to consider, the comparative distance of France or Poland, the relative importance of the two countries to us, the strength of the confederacy by which the latter was oppressed, and every other circumstance which should guide the discretion or regulate the conduct of every sober politician.

Well, I will put all these considerations out of the question: I will not urge the obvious absurdity of going in search of distant dangers, and overlooking that which knocked at our door; I will

say nothing of the comparative disadvantages of going to war against Austria, Prussia, and Russia, without an ally, and the going to war against France, with all those mighty powers to aid us; I will even forego the use of the argument to which I have before adverted, the different degrees of urgency and of popularity which there must always be between a war, such as that for Poland would have been, for the sake of the balance of power, and one like that in which we are engaged with France, for our own defence and preservation. I shall pass over all this; I will admit, for a moment, that there was equal necessity, equal call, for our exertions in both cases; and then I will put the argument simply and solely on this ground: if there be two powers, who have equally offended you, and from whom, by war or by negociation, you must seek redress; if one of those powers, however in other respects odious and wicked in your eyes, cannot, however, be denied to have a settled, a responsible government, with which a negociation may be easily and prudently carried on—while, in the other, however otherwise amiable and admirable, it must be admitted, that there is no such thing, no safe or tangible means of negociation—does it not seem a most unaccountable perverseness of judgment, which shall say, "Negociate with that party with which negociation is impracticable;

go to war with that where negociation would equally avail; negociate with France; go to war with Austria, Russia, Prussia; take the bond of the beggar, and throw the solvent debtor into gaol!"

We have been told that this is a war, into which we have been hurried by clamour and prejudice; in short, that it is a war of passion. If by a war of passion, gentlemen mean, that it is one contrary to humanity, justice, and sound policy,—that it is a war which owes its origin and support to the indulgence of some blameable propensity in our nature, gentlemen, in establishing this, have undertaken a harder task than they seem to be aware of. They must arraign nature, and confute instinct; for they must prove that self-preservation is a passion, which it is criminal to indulge. But if by a war of passion, gentlemen understand no more, than that in addition to all the legitimate and cogent causes of war; in addition to the necessity of repelling unprovoked aggression, of succouring our distressed allies, of saving Europe, of preserving ourselves; that in addition to all this, there are circumstances in this war, which engage and interest the best feelings and sensibilities of our nature: in this sense we might be proud to own, that it is fairly to be called a war of passion; and if from that dignified character it were to be degraded into a war of ambition

and interest, it would cease to have in me a warm and zealous defender.

An appeal is made to our prudence; and we are asked, with an air of triumph, what are we to get by this war? Before I attempt to answer that question, I will take the liberty to ask, whether or not that question properly and particularly applies to a war, such as we contend this to be, for our political existence; or to a war such as we contend this not to be, a war of aggrandizement and speculation? If, indeed, ministers had come down to this House, and said, "We have an opportunity of procuring great and advantageous acquisitions for the country; we may wrest from France some fertile province, or extort from her some valuable branch of her commerce, if you will but support us in a war;"—and if upon these grounds the House had consented to support them; then I grant the whole matter at issue between the House and ministers,—the question which might be most fairly put, as conclusive upon the merits of the war, would be,—Well, what after all, are we likely to get by this war? But, in the present case, it was widely different. We might be proud to say, that in this war, that is not the first question that we asked. I, for one, should be ashamed to defend a war, in which it was the only question that could be satisfactorily answered. Yet, Sir, let not gentlemen run away

with the idea that we have gained nothing. Sir, that we have still a government; that the functions of this House have not been usurped by a corresponding society, or a Scotch Convention; that instead of sitting in debate here, whether or not we shall subsidize the King of Sardinia, we are not rather employed in devising how to raise a forced loan for some proconsular deputy, whom the banditti of Paris might have sent to receive our contributions; Sir, that we sit here at all—These are the fruits of the war.

But when neither our reason nor our prudence can be set against the war, an attempt is made to alarm our apprehensions. The French are stated to be an invincible people: inflamed to a degree of madness with the holy enthusiasm of freedom, there is nothing that they will not undertake, there is nothing that they cannot accomplish. I am as ready as any man to allow, that the French are enthusiastically animated, be it how it may, to a state of absolute insanity. I desire no better proof of their being mad, than to see them hugging themselves in a system of slavery so gross and grinding as their present, and calling at the same time aloud upon all Europe to admire and envy their freedom. But before their plea of madness can be admitted as conclusive against our right to be at war with them, gentlemen would do well to recollect that of madness there are several

kinds. If theirs had been a harmless idiot lunacy, which had contented itself with playing its tricks, and practising its fooleries at home; with dressing up strumpets in oak-leaves, and inventing nicknames for the calendar, I should have been far from desiring to interrupt their innocent amusements; we might have looked on with hearty contempt, indeed, but with a contempt not wholly unmixed with commiseration.

But if theirs be a madness of a different kind, a moody mischievous insanity,—if not contented with tearing and wounding themselves, they proceed to exert their unnatural strength for the annoyance of their neighbours,—if not satisfied with weaving straws, and wearing fetters at home, they attempt to carry their systems and their slavery abroad, and to impose them on the nations of Europe; it becomes necessary then, that those nations should be roused to resistance. Such a disposition must, for the safety and peace of the world, be repelled, and, if possible, eradicated.

When it is found that we are not to be daunted by the effects of their madness, we are called upon to compassionate its cause. It has arisen, as we are told, partly from the oppression of their ancient government, and partly from their being inflamed and exasperated by the present powerful confederacy formed against them. What, if I were to be attacked by an individual madman

—is it my business to proceed to an investigation of the origin of his disease, before I guard against its consequences? And if I find, upon examination, that there was reasonable and just cause for his running mad, if a stander-by shall say to me, "that poor man lost his wits from love, or was driven out of them by the cruelty of relations—if you were to know by what a melancholy train of accidents that unhappy maniac was reduced to his present desperate condition, you would be above resisting him!"—Is this sort of reasoning to operate with me against the adoption of any measures of self-defence? I can hardly think so—nor can I agree that, with regard to the French nation, it would merit much more attention—no matter how they came to be what they are; if wild beasts I find them, as against wild beasts, I must defend myself.

I do not envy gentlemen the task which they have imposed on themselves of poisoning the fair hopes of the country, and reducing the minds of the people, otherwise not inclined to a want of confidence in the successes of the war, to a state of depression and despair. I do not much envy their industry, neither, I confess, do I much fear their success. But when gentlemen have once undertaken that ungrateful task (for unpleasing I am sure it must be, and nothing but a strong and imperious sense of their duty could induce

them to undertake it at all)—when they have once done so, I think they are bound to go through with it. And then, if all that they have said be true; if our situation be indeed as deplorable as they represent it—if we have failed in all our plans—and been baffled in every exertion—if such have been the nature and extent of our misfortunes, that we have neither satisfaction in what is past, nor resources for the present, nor hopes for the future—and if for all these reasons, it is become necessary, as they state, to sue for peace—let not gentlemen stop here—let them finish the picture—let them show us the extent of our calamities—and describe all the horrors of our situation. If for these reasons, peace must be asked, let them tell us, for these same reasons, what sort of a peace we are likely to obtain. It would not be a common peace, to be obtained by common concessions, or preserved with common security. On our part, assuredly, we must insist on the disbanding of the great standing army, which is the instrument of the revolutionary government of our enemy; and can it be thought that the potent Republic, which has, according to some gentlemen, baffled all our schemes, and withstood all our efforts, would submit to so degrading and humiliating a concession? Our only reliance then must be on the public faith and responsibility of the present

rulers of France—men, whose characters are so familiar to this House, that I shall not think it worth while to delineate them—but I will ask gentlemen, whether or not they recollect an argument, which some of them brought forward on a former night—that it was by the distraction of that unhappy country within, and the pressure of hostile force from without, that these monsters had been raised to power? If they avow that argument, I would farther ask, whether they must not acknowledge, that the power of these men would cease with the cessation of the cause that produced it—that those causes would cease with the war—and that the very act of making peace, therefore, on the responsibility of the present rulers of France, would, by destroying their power, destroy the only security of its continuance?

So much for our security, and on the other hand—what terms could we offer? In vain might we propose all the usual securities of pacification on our part—the recalling our troops—the dismantling our navy—the cession of the islands and provinces which we may have taken—the abandonment of our allies, and the relinquishment of this same Savoy, of which so much had been said: the answer of France would be, "No—that is not enough from you—it is idle mockery to talk of those things as pledges for

your peaceable disposition towards us. It is not enough, that you relinquish all that you have gained, or indemnify us for all we have expended, that you expose your commerce to our rapine, and your coasts to our invasion. You have among you what must keep alive an internal disposition to enmity against us, and a power that will give effect to that disposition; you have your constitution, surrender us that. It is against that, that we originally declared war;—by the submission of that alone can the war be determined. We ask no more of you, our enemies, as a pledge of peace, than we have before demanded of our friends, the Belgians, as a memorial of amity. But, while your Constitution remains, whatever other show of friendship you may hold out to us, never can true reconcilement grow between sentiments and systems so opposite—while that continues to give vigour to your government, and generosity to your people, never can you sit tamely by spectators of the fantastic pranks which we mean to play throughout Europe."

But neither does it appear to me, that the call for peace is so pressing and immediate. I have heard it asserted, indeed, that the people were awakening from what was called their delusion, and were become clamorous for the speedy conclusion of the war. I heard it asserted on a former night, that even among those gentlemen

who support ministers in this House, there was not one who would stand up to say, that in his heart he was satisfied with the prosecution of the war. I, for my part, cannot boast of such various and extensive communications out of doors, as many gentlemen might have—nor have I long enough had the honour of a seat in this House, to be able to judge by any other criterion than its votes, of the touch and temper of its inclinations. But so far as my own limited communication and short experience enables me to speak to this point, I can fairly say—I come from among the people, whom I have left, not disheartened and desponding, anxious, indeed, (as which of us is not?) for the happy and honourable termination of the war—but resolved to persevere with vigour, till a termination, such as they approve, not disgraceful, nor calamitous, shall be obtained. I come among the representatives of the people, whom I find as they ought to be, in unison with the sentiments of their constituents, to continue to prosecute with firmness a war begun through necessity;—supporting it with unremitted ardour, and sanctioning it with unexampled majorities.

For all these reasons, because I conceive the war, of which this treaty is a natural and necessary part, to have begun in necessity, and to be continued in justice; because I cannot think

that in its progress it has been so deplorably and disgracefully unsuccessful as some gentlemen are willing to represent it; because I do not see how our acquisitions in the West Indies can fairly be stated as a loss; because I do not see, how our conquests in the East can properly be characterized as disgraces and defeats; because I do not see, how the destruction of the maritime force of our only maritime rival, can reasonably be calculated as a fatal blow to our commercial and naval superiority;—but, because I do in my heart believe, the very reverse of all these propositions to be true: because, to conduct the war to a successful and glorious termination, I conceive that the system of alliances, which we have formed, should be scrupulously maintained; —that they should be maintained, not only with those powers, which were of themselves strong enough to perform a part adequate to the assistance which they might receive from us, but, if there should appear in any of the allied powers, a want of ability to perform such a part,—if there should appear to be weakness in their councils, or slackness in their spirit, or inadequacy in their force; that they ought to derive from us the ability which they wanted, they ought to be counselled by our wisdom, and animated with our ardour, and recruited with our strength; because, among all the allied powers, I know

none to whom it is more necessary that such support should be liberally furnished, than to the King of Sardinia, I shall cheerfully give my vote for referring the treaty to a committee.

MR. STANLEY followed Mr. Canning in the debate. After having highly eulogized the eloquence of the honourable gentleman who preceded him, (whose speech was listened to throughout with the deepest attention,) he expressed his approval of the treaty, and should have done so, if the subsidy had been doubled. Peace was at present impossible, and for his part, he thought the war had not been conducted with sufficient vigour. These were his sentiments as a country gentleman.

MR. Fox replied; after which the motion was agreed to.

Besides the prominent part which Mr. Canning took this session, on the motion respecting the treaty with the King of Sardinia, he spoke briefly in the debates, upon the causes of the failure at Dunkirk, the evacuation of Toulon, and on the Habeas Corpus suspension bill. In all the accounts of the parliamentary proceedings, I have met with, there is but a scanty and imperfect report of his sentiments upon these occasions: moreover, the interest they once excited is in a great

degree gone by. In this unsatisfactory shape, therefore, I abstain from embodying them in the present collection of Mr. Canning's speeches. And it is but right that I should thus early state my intention of exercising here, and in other parts of this publication, a discretion in giving to the public, those speeches, and those only, which reach me through some authentic or approved channel of intelligence, which appear to me to bear peculiarly the stamp and impress of Mr. Canning's mind, and which are calculated to excite the interest, or contribute to the instruction, or pleasure, of those into whose hands these volumes may come.—Ed.

ADDRESS ON THE KING'S SPEECH AT THE OPENING OF THE SESSION.

DECEMBER 30, 1794.

Sir Edward Knatchbull regretted that all idea of a safe and honourable peace was at present hopeless. The continuation of the war with increased vigour became, therefore, the only object to which our attention should be turned. He concluded, by moving the following address of thanks to His Majesty, for his most gracious speech from the throne.

"To assure His Majesty, that it is equally our duty and our anxious desire to second His Majesty's views for the

welfare of his people at this important crisis, by our best advice and assistance: that, much as we must desire the restoration of peace, on safe and honourable grounds, we join with His Majesty in thinking, that it is only from firmness and perseverance that we can hope for the attainment of that end, and for the preservation and permanent security of our dearest interests; and that, notwithstanding the disappointments and reverses which have been experienced in the course of the last campaign, we retain a firm conviction of the necessity of persisting in the vigorous prosecution of the just and necessary war in which we are engaged.

"That, from considering the situation of our enemies we are persuaded that the efforts which have led to their successes, and the unexampled means by which those efforts have been supported, have produced, amongst themselves, the pernicious effects which were to be expected from them; and that the circumstances which have taken place in the interior of the country, afford strong marks of the progressive and rapid decay of their resources, and of the instability of every part of that violent and unnatural system, which is equally ruinous to France, and incompatible with the tranquillity of other nations.

"That, although a sense of present difficulties have led the States-General of the United Provinces, to enter into negociations for peace with the party now prevailing in France, we are fully sensible how little real security any established government or independent state can derive, under the present circumstances, from the result of such negociations;

and we are convinced that they could not be attempted on our part, without sacrificing both our honour and safety to an enemy, whose chief animosity is avowedly directed against these kingdoms:

"That we cannot but applaud His Majesty's determination to use the most effectual means for the further augmentation of his forces, and to omit no opportunity of concerting the operations of the next campaign, with such of the Powers of Europe as are impressed with the same sense of the necessity of vigour and exertion:

"That we are persuaded that His Majesty may, at all times, justly rely on the valour of his forces by sea and land, and on the affection and public spirit of his people, contending for their essential interests, and deeply sensible of his majesty's parental solicitude for their happiness and welfare:

"That we acknowledge His Majesty's goodness in having directed the instrument, by which he has accepted the crown and sovereignty of Corsica to be laid before us; and we are sensible that the local importance of that island, and the spirited efforts of its inhabitants, naturally recommended them to His Majesty's protection:—that we learn, with great pleasure, that His Majesty has concluded a treaty with the United States of America, with the view of removing, as far as possible, all grounds of jealousy and misunderstanding, and of improving an intercourse beneficial to both countries; and that we shall be ready, as soon as the treaty is laid before us, to consider of the necessary provisions for carrying it into effect:

"That we cannot sufficiently express the satisfaction which all His Majesty's subjects must derive, from the auspicious event of the conclusion of a treaty for the marriage of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, with the Princess Caroline, daughter of the Duke of Brunswick; and that, participating warmly in the sentiments which His Majesty must feel on an occasion at once so interesting to his domestic happiness, and so important to the interests of his people, we shall cheerfully proceed to enable His Majesty to make provision for an establishment suitable to the rank and dignity of the heir apparent to the crown of these kingdoms:

"That the considerations which prove the necessity of a vigorous prosecution of the war, cannot fail to induce us to make a timely and ample provision for the several branches of the public service; and that, while we feel the painful necessity of imposing additional burthens on our constituents, it is a just consolation and satisfaction to us to learn, that the state of our credit, commerce, and resources, is such as might naturally be expected to result from the continued exertions of industry, under the protection of a free and well regulated government:

"That, entertaining a just sense of the blessings now so long enjoyed by this country, we feel it incumbent upon us to make every effort which can enable us to transmit those blessings unimpaired to our posterity; and that we cordially join with His Majesty in a confident hope, that, under the protection of Providence, and with constancy and perseverance on our part, the principles of social order, morality,

and religion, will ultimately be successful; and that His Majesty's faithful subjects will find their present exertions and sacrifices rewarded by the secure and permanent enjoyment of tranquillity at home, and by the deliverance of Europe from the greatest danger with which it has been threatened since the establishment of civilized society.

Mr. CANNING. Sir, Whatever difference of opinion might prevail in general in this House, I am led to hope, that, upon some of the topics contained in His Majesty's speech there will be a perfect unanimity. I am not so sanguine as to expect that, upon those points on which there was last session manifested so wide a difference of opinion among gentlemen, they should upon this occasion perfectly agree. But there are circumstances referred to in His Majesty's speech, which must give the most sincere satisfaction to every man in this House and in the country. The information that a treaty of amity and commerce has been concluded with the United States of America, must, I am sure, have this effect; and the gracious communication of His Majesty, respecting the marriage of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, must inspire sentiments of joy and congratulation in the breast of every British subject. —With regard to other parts of His Majesty's

speech, I am aware, that to expect a complete coincidence of opinion would be vain and fruitless; I have some hopes, however, that, for one night, gentlemen will consent to lay aside their differences, and unanimously to concur in the Address which has just been moved. If it should happen, that I should be disappointed in my hopes of perfect unanimity, at least, I hope, I shall have the honour of dividing with a large majority.

With those gentlemen with whom I had the pleasure to vote last year, it will not be necessary to urge many arguments to induce them to concur in the present address. If any were necessary, I would only desire them to look at and consider the various decisions which this House has come to since the commencement of the war. Those decisions, gentlemen would recollect, had not been come to by this House, but after the most mature deliberation, and the most elaborate discussion. If, then, the opinions adopted by the majority of the House were founded at that time in wisdom and justice, I trust that nothing has occurred since we last met, which can properly and reasonably induce us to alter our sentiments. Some circumstances have undoubtedly taken place of an unfavourable nature to this country. I am ready to admit, that the successes of the enemy have been great and unexpected; that by the most unheard-of exertions, they have over-

run an immense tract of territory, and have compelled the allied armies to retreat before them. I am ready also to admit, that the allies have in many instances, been unsuccessful; that many of their plans have failed, and that this country has shared in the general misfortune. But when I admit all this, I must be allowed to ask, ought it to weaken or strengthen our determination of pursuing the war in the most vigorous manner? The reasons which induce me to be of the latter opinion, I will state in the manner least likely to trespass upon the patience of the House.

Will any gentleman stand up and undertake to prove that any of the misfortunes, which we have experienced during the last campaign, are imputable to the ministers of this country? Are they not rather such as no human prudence could foresee, and no human power prevent? Most of the failures which have attended us in the last campaign must be imputed to the defection of our allies, and to the unparalleled exertions and irresistible force of our enemies. I am perfectly aware it may be said, that the government of this country might have avoided many of the calamities of the war, if they had attended to the warnings and predictions of gentlemen on the other side of the House. It is true that they foretold the defection of our allies, and the astonishing exertions of the enemy, and I cannot but

confess that, unfortunately, the event has justified the prediction. Here, however, I wish to observe, that it is no difficult matter to prophesy disappointment and ill success. If the prediction prove false, gentlemen feel too much satisfaction in the success of their country to think of the prediction; if it prove true, those who made it triumph in their superior sagacity. But when I thus candidly give credit to those gentlemen for their predictions, I wish it not to be forgotten, that some predictions were made by ministers and those who supported the war, which have been equally justified by the event. The government which existed in France, was represented on the other side of the House as perfectly stable and secure; on this side, as so constructed, that it could not possibly exist for any length of time. When Robespierre was in the height of his power, when he governed France with the most absolute sway, and when his will was received throughout France as law, even then his fall was predicted—with how much justice, the event has shown. When Jacobinism was at its greatest height; when its influence circulated through every part of the French government; when it seemed as the very source of motion in all their enterprises; even then its fall was foretold,—and, happily for humanity, with truth.

I wish, however, not to be misunderstood; I do not mean that, by the accession of a more moderate party to the sovereign power in France, the possibility of our treating with them has become greater. Perhaps, the only difference between them and the Jacobins, may be, that they possessed the intentions, but not the power of the Jacobins. The hostility of the moderate party towards this country is equal to that of the Jacobins: the difference is, that they have not the same means of carrying their hostile purpose into execution. I admit that the exertions of the enemy have been great; but consider for a moment, at what an expense these exertions have been made. It appears from the reports of Cambon, the French financier, that the expenses of France, since the commencement of the war, have been three hundred and thirty millions sterling; and since the commencement of the war with England, two hundred and sixty millions. This enormous expense they have been enabled to sustain, by seizing all the property in the kingdom, and distributing out sustenance as a kind of donative to the people; by raising through the operation of terror, the value of assignats; and depressing, by the same means, the price of purchasable commodities.

Who can doubt, then, but in the quick succession of changes, the vaunted *moderates* will fall? Who will contend that they can have the

same resources as their predecessors, seeing that they profess to give up the system of terror, by which alone those resources were procured, unless he be at the same time prepared to argue, that the superstructure becomes strong in proportion as the foundation is taken away? It is in power alone that *moderatism* differs from Jacobinism; its virulence remains unimpaired. If it were possible, Sir, that the events of the whole French revolution could be blotted from the page of history, excepting those which have taken place since the establishment of what is called moderation in that country, and that they were to go down to posterity, with no other comment of the historian than simply, "This was termed their moderate system,"—what an opinion would after ages form of the preceding periods, in comparison with which the system now existing could be defined, mercy and moderation!

But supposing I were ready to allow, that a material difference exists between the character of the present rulers in France and that of their predecessors—admitting, for the argument's sake, that, when I look towards Paris, I do not discover there those scenes of atrocity at which, twelve months ago, my heart revolted with horror and indignation; that, instead of carrying on as heretofore, their commerce of murder and proscription, I find the government of the present

day occupied in the comparatively innocent employment of adjusting their accounts, and striking the balance—settling their partnership of blood, and ascribing to each individual his particular share of the guilt;—granting, I say, these circumstances, it may be asked, why not conclude a peace on honourable terms with the present rulers? or, at least, why not make the attempt, and inquire what terms we are likely to obtain?—Because the one is impossible, the other unnecessary It is impossible to look for a safe and honourable peace from *moderatism*, any more than from Jacobinism, until we shall have been convinced that it is not only more mild, but more stable; that it at once holds out the probability of tranquillity abroad, and of permanency at home. But even if these characteristics were discoverable in it, it would be less necessary now than ever to humiliate ourselves so far as to demand of them what terms of peace they may be disposed to grant us; because we shall speedily have an opportunity of judging of them more certainly than from any declarations which they might hold out to us, from those which have been obtained from them by other nations.

Holland is at this moment negociating a separate peace; how wisely, how justly, or how successfully, it is not our business to argue. If we examine the debates and decrees of the Conven-

tion, we shall find they divide their enemies into two classes: the first, of those who provoked the war, and the second, that of those who were forced into it; two classes of which we rank under the most aggravated, Holland under the least. Holland, I say, is now soliciting peace; let us see what will be the issue. The most determined advocates for peace have gone no farther in their expectations than to the *status quo ante bellum.* Now, supposing Holland, under all the circumstances which operate in its favour, as a power whom they consider as having been forced against her will into hostilities, as being the first to ask for a cessation of them, and as being that nation which, of all others, they were most anxious to detach from our alliance,—if Holland obtains merely a *status quo,* can it be reasonably expected that we, who have no such favourable circumstances in our situation; we, to whom they assign the foremost rank in their enmity, shall be treated with equal advantages? I think it can hardly be imagined.

But even supposing this to be the case, ought we to accept peace on such grounds? Holland, let it be recollected, has not conquered any territory, nor has she received many emigrants. But shall we, admitting France would treat with us in the same degree, relinquish all our conquests, and consign the objects of charity and honourable confidence, to that vengeance from which they have

sought refuge on our shores? The acquisitions which we have made, considering them only in a commercial point of view, as an indemnity for the expences which the war has obliged us to incur, nobody would willingly abandon; but when to this interested and cold-blooded way of stating the subject, is added the consideration of the thousands who have fled to us from their sanguinary tyrants, surely there is no humane mind that can for a moment entertain the idea of giving them up, without necessity. Let gentlemen only recollect what their own feelings have been, whenever, in the course of the last campaign, it has unfortunately happened that the emigrants have been surrendered: let them recollect whether the first question that they have asked, upon such an event, has not uniformly been—Was there an inevitable necessity for doing this? And if the question could be answered in the negative, what have been the feelings of indignation that arose in their breasts against the base and cowardly treachery of such an abandonment? Apply this to your own country. Will you agree that she shall incur the disgrace of a proceeding so foreign to every sentiment of honour, and of human feeling? Will you agree, without a necessity so paramount, as neither to be avoided nor resisted, to yield up to these savage proselytes of mercy and moderation, the throats of all those confiding suppliants who are

clinging round your knees for protection? Sir, it is impossible.

The next argument against peace, is its insecurity; it would be the mere name of peace, not a wholesome and refreshing repose, but a feverish and troubled slumber, from which we should soon be roused to fresh horrors and insults. What are the blessings of peace, which make it so desirable? What, but that it implies tranquil and secure enjoyment of our homes? What, but that it will restore our seamen and our soldiers, who have been fighting to preserve our homes, to a share of that tranquillity and security? What, but that it lessens the expenses, and alleviates the burdens, of the people? What, but that it explores some new channel of commercial intercourse, or re-opens those that war had shut? What, but that it renews some broken link of amity, or forms some new attachment between nations; and softens the asperities of hostility and hatred, into kindness, and conciliation, and reciprocal good will?—And which of all these blessings could we hope to obtain by a peace, under the present circumstances, with France? Not kindness and conciliation, most assuredly; not a renewal of social harmony or commercial intercourse; still less could we venture to restore to the loom or to the plough the brave men who have fought our battles; for who could say how soon some fresh government might not start up

in France, which might feel it their inclination or their interest to renew hostilities? The utmost, therefore, that we could hope to obtain, would be a short, delusive, timid, and suspicious interval of armistice, without any material diminution of expenditure; without security at home, or a chance of purchasing it by exertions abroad; without any of the essential blessings of peace, or any of the possible advantages of war: a state of doubt and preparation, such as would retain in itself all the causes of jealousy to other states, which, in the usual course of things, produce remonstrance and inquiry, and (if they are answered unsatisfactorily,) war. The only other alternative is, that in stupid confidence we should unarm; and leave ourselves a helpless prey to the first renewed attack of the enemy; sure to meet the occasion when it should arise, under every possible disadvantage; having unscrewed and let down from the pitch to which we have raised them, the great machines of our defence, our army and our navy; and hopeless of being able to raise them again, by any exertion or any expense to such a height as would be calculated to resist the unrelaxed efforts of our enemy.

If I am asked, what good effects we can possibly expect from a continuance of the war, I answer, that, calculating from past experience, I look for the dilapidation and decay of the present government in France, as certainly, as it is certain that

every other government, erected in that country since the revolution, has fallen, more or less rapidly, before it. This effect I think desirable; not as is perpetually insinuated, from any taste or preference for this or that form of government in France, but because I would have their government, whatever it may be, strong and solid at home, that it may be safe for other nations, I consider the continuance of our exertions as requisite to this end; not from any hope or wish, that we way conquer France by our arms, but because if an argument, which has been much and often used on the other side of the House, be true, that our hostility has in fact been the principal cause of all the changes and convulsions that have torn the interior of France, and if it be true also that *moderatism* be so much better than Jacobinism, then we have to congratulate ourselves on having worked one good change, and may hope by perseverance to effect one still more desirable. If it was our hostility that excited and consolidated the enormous tyranny of Robespierre, let us draw the natural conclusion, that it was our hostility that destroyed it. If we by attacking France, created the monster Jacobinism, it is not fairly to be denied, that the continuance of our attacks also destroyed it. And if all this be so, the natural conclusion is, that we produced the alteration from Jacobinism to *moderatism*, and therefore we may finally bring the country to a

proper form of government; not with the view of conquest, or of imposing our own choice on them, but to force them, if you will, finally to choose such a one, as shall secure their own happiness, and our safety.

If I am asked, what are the means on which I rely for bringing this about, I answer, their weakness and our strength: their weakness, which is to be looked for, not in their armies, but in the decay of the resources which have supported those armies, in the exhaustion of their country, and in the distractions and discontents of its inhabitants; our strength, which is to be calculated not from the progress of our arms, but from the flourishing state of the kingdom; from the spirit which we bear, and the vigorous capacities we possess for exertion; from our resources, not only unexhausted, but as yet comparatively almost untouched; from the unabating confidence and loyalty of the people and the unalterable justice of our cause.

Impressed with these sentiments, and confident in these hopes, I think I cannot better discharge my duty to my country, or better consult the advantage of Europe, and of the civilized world, than by seconding the motion for the Address.

MR. WILBERFORCE objected to the Address. This was a crisis wherein there was much to be urged on both

sides, and all that was left us was a choice of evils. After adjusting the claims of conflicting arguments, and impartially assigning its due weight to each, he had at length a decided opinion to which scale he should assign the preponderance. He would, therefore, state his firm belief, that peace was desirable. As to the present address, it was not couched in terms at all moderate or pacific, and no one could adopt it, who was not prepared to say, that Great Britain ought never to treat with France, till a counter-revolution should be effected. He concluded by moving an amendment to the effect, "that upon a full consideration of all the events and circumstances of the present war, and of some transactions which have lately passed in France, and also of the negociations entered into by the States-General, we think it advisable and expedient to endeavour to restore the blessings of peace to His Majesty's subjects, and allies, upon just and reasonable terms."

Mr. Windham opposed the amendment; he said, that the ill success of the war was fairly imputable to the misconduct of some of the allies. Besides, we had not been true to ourselves. The political societies in England had propagated principles inimical to the interests of the country, and endeavoured to render the war unpopular. It was said that the members of those societies had been acquitted by the verdict of a jury, and gentlemen talked of their innocence in a tone of exultation. He wished them joy of the innocence of an acquitted felon.

Mr. Robinson called the honourable member to order;

he could not hear without indignation the term *felon* applied to a man who had been acquitted by a verdict of an English jury.

Mr. Windham explained, and said, that although there was no legal evidence of their guilt in the opinion of the juries, the deficiency of legal evidence by no means proved that they were free from moral guilt. Comparing the events of the late war with those wars in which this country was engaged with foreign nations, it could not be said to be unsuccessful; it was unsuccessful only as compared with the wishes, the hopes, and the force of the confederacy.

Mr. Pitt expressed his astonishment at the change of sentiments in those who supported the war at its commencement. He denied that the tendency of the King's speech was to inculcate the continuance of the war, until the government of France assumed a monarchical form. He admitted that there might be intermediate changes, that may give the probability of a peace with France, even in its republican form of government, though he certainly had no idea of any peace being secure, unless France returned to the monarchical system. As to the present war, did the gentlemen who now desert it, expect that a peace could be obtained of such a nature as had been so well described by his honourable friend? (Mr. Canning.) Did they hope for a free and useful commerce? Did they expect armies on both sides would be disbanded? or that the fleets would be called home?—He believed not. The right honourable gentleman proceeded to take an extensive

review of the resources of the country, which were fully adequate to the war, the vigorous prosecution of which was now more than ever necessary, as we could not obtain peace on terms, politic, safe, or honourable.

Mr. Fox supported the amendment in a speech of great ability—he said, that the House of Commons ought not, by their address to the Crown, to pledge Parliament never to agree to a peace with France, while the present republican government existed. It was the first time that the House of Commons was called upon to assure His Majesty, that they would never think it advisable to treat with the French republic on the present system, unless in the case of such imperious necessity on the part of this country as precluded all reasoning.

Mr. Pitt intimated, across the table, that expressions in a former address pledged the House to this.

Mr. Fox resumed.—He knew there were expressions in a former address, which admitted of such a construction; but the minister's own friends now told him, that they did not interpret those words as he did. If the minister had said plainly and clearly, in the first instance, "This war is undertaken for the express purpose of destroying the French government, and come what will, we can never make peace while that government endures;" he might not, perhaps, have so many supporters, but he would have been saved the unpleasant feeling of this day's difference with his friends. As to the disasters of the war, never in one campaign, since the irruptions of the Goths and Vandals, had such reverses been experienced on one hand,

and acquisitions made on the other. They were disasters which not fortune, but folly had brought upon the country. He contended it was idle in us to be so much afraid of peace with France, when so many other nations—Denmark, Sweden, America, &c. had made the experiment without any mischievous consequences. The difficulty respecting the emigrants might be a difficulty, from which the minister who encouraged them, found it no easy matter to extricate himself; but it was the nation's honour, not the minister's, about which he was anxious. He was unwilling to rely upon the argument drawn from the exhausted finances of France, as an inducement to continue the war. That argument was resorted to before—we were told the very same thing last year, yet the success of the enemy continued. He concluded by exhorting the minister to propose treating now, which he held to be more honourable than to wait until he was beaten into it.

At four in the morning, the House divided:—

TELLERS.

Ayes	Colonel Maitland, Mr. Whitbread, Jun.	73
Noes	Mr. Serjeant Watson, Mr. Sumner.	246

The amendment was thus negatived. The original address was then put, and carried.

COMMITTEE ON THE STATE OF THE NATION.

MARCH 24th, 1795.

MR. Fox moved, that the House resolve itself into a committee on the state of the nation. It was opposed by Mr. Pitt, who moved, as an amendment, the adjournment of the House. After a long and interesting discussion, the amendment was carried. The following extract is from the speech of Mr. Canning on this occasion—it contains an eloquent enforcement of the advantages derivable to a free country from the publicity of the proceedings of its government.

My hon. friend (Mr. Sheridan,) has confessed, that he considered the motion in no other light than as a motion for the removal of ministers. In this view, I cannot but think that it came forward at rather an unseasonable period. The removal of the existing ministers was intended, no doubt, to make room for others who would pursue an opposite line of conduct, and whose first object would, consequently, be a negociation for peace; and if so, it would surely have been more rational to have attempted to effect it, before the House had sanctioned their past conduct by its approbation—before it had intrusted to their hands, by such large and liberal supplies, the means of continuing the war. But it seemed in no other country than this, could ministers have continued in

office after such repeated failures and disgraces. The reason of this difference between this and other countries is obvious: in arbitrary governments, where the people are admitted into no share or knowledge of the plans of action, but are left to form their judgment of the propriety of any line of conduct solely from the event, it was very natural, that being thus circumscribed in the means of forming their opinion, they should form it hastily and arbitrarily, and, knowing no other criterion than success, should conclude that what had failed in the execution, must have been wrong in the plan, and as such, ought to bring punishment upon its advisers. But in a free country, where the people have the springs and motives of action, as well as the action itself, brought before their eyes—where they go hand in hand with their representatives, and their representatives with the executive government, in weighing the propriety of measures, as they arise, and while they are pursuing, it is not natural or necessary that they should judge so hastily from the event alone, but that having the power of weighing all circumstances together, they should affix blame to failure, only where failure might seem to have flowed from misconduct, and not from mischance.

ON MR. TIERNEY'S MOTION RESPECTING PEACE WITH THE FRENCH REPUBLIC.

DECEMBER 11, 1798.

The following new appointments to places in the Administration were made since January, 1794, *(see page* 1.*)*

Lord President of the Council	EARL OF CHATHAM.
Lord Privy Seal	EARL OF WESTMORELAND.
Secretary at War	RIGHT HON. WILLIAM WYNDHAM.
Principal Secretary of State for the Home Department	THE DUKE OF PORTLAND.

The persons filling the other high offices of the state this year, (1798,) were the same who occupied them in 1794.

MR. TIERNEY felt himself impelled to make the present motion, from a comparison of the situation of our affairs at this moment with that which it exhibited some time since. He brought it forward principally to enter his protest against the new spirit that had begun to rise up. The spirit he alluded to, was that which led to an extensive continental connection. He regretted that the pacific disposition which was manifested in His Majesty's declaration, soon after the conferences at Lisle, had been since abandoned. *The first objection he anticipated to his motion, was, that it broke in upon the undoubted power which the crown had of making war or peace;* but this was a point which would not be much insisted upon, when it was con-

sidered that the power of that House was unquestionable with respect to granting supplies. *It might also be said, that this motion had a tendency to damp the spirit which was rising in Europe. He disclaimed a wish to discourage such a spirit, and had no idea that his motion, if assented to, would have such an operation. Indeed, he was led to think there was no symptom of any spirit rising from principle in any quarter.* Look at Prussia; that power had been at peace for three years with the French republic, and its minister was treated there with all the respect which nations usually show towards those with whom they wished to continue a good understanding. If we looked at the Emperor, we could not say there was any dispute actually between him and the French; there was indeed a congress held at Radstadt, but that he believed was a trial to make the best of a mere squabble for the right and left bank of a river. If we looked to Russia, we could not see any thing interesting: he saw nothing from that quarter but professions; neither did he see any thing in the conduct of the Ottoman Porte, which led him to think that the resentment shown in that quarter was a resentment arising from any principle on which we could rest for a permanency. He did not mean to say that the enemy had not been guilty of the most scandalous injustice, but he did not see any thing like a systematic course of opposition to the projects of the enemy. The spirit of opposition in Turkey would cease when she got what she wanted for herself—she would have no share in the deliverance of Europe. It would be granted to him, he presumed, that unless the confede-

racy were general, it could not be attended with any extensive advantages. Now, with respect to a confederacy, it existed in greatest force when the unfortunate monarch was under trial, and at the time of his death, and when France had not the advantage of a settled government; when her troops were undisciplined—when she had nothing to oppose to her difficulties, but the energy of her people. Compare the extended boundaries of France now, with her situation at the time of the former general confederacy. That confederacy failed—its discomfiture was produced either by the skill of the French, or by the jealousy of the confederates, whichever of these two causes the House took, the conclusion was the same; and in neither did he see any new ground for hope from a general confederacy. The French were not less skilful—their generals not less able, nor their armies less powerful: and as to the allies, he did not see any greater probability of their adhering to each other than formerly. Could we have more confidence in Austria or Prussia now than at a former period, after we had the experience of being deserted by both? Could any of the powers expect much from the co-operation of Russia? Besides, what was the real advantage to be derived to Great Britain from her combination with these powers? It may be said, however, that nations feel what their interests are now better than formerly. For his part he could not conceive that any thing could be done to inflame the resentment of the confederates, than what had been done already by the French republic? Could any thing be done to excite deeper hatred in monarchy against French prin-

ciples, than the conduct held towards that monarch? Could the nobility of a country have deeper anger against any thing, than against that conduct which abolished their whole order at once? Would any thing make the prayers of the church more fervent against anarchy, than the overthrowing all church establishments? Could any thing more enrage lords of manors, and such persons, than the total extinction of feudal rights? Yet these were the men who united against France, and it was from an union of these again we looked for the deliverance of Europe. He would be glad to see France driven within her ancient limits; but let us not say we would bring about the deliverance of Europe—we could not accomplish it—and he, therefore, did not wish that we should make so extravagant an attempt. He would remind the House, that ministers put into His Majesty's mouth, after the breaking up the conferences at Lisle, words tantamount to the spirit of his motion.

The honourable gentleman here read a passage* from His Majesty's declaration, respecting the negociation for peace with France. The passage was expressive of His Majesty's disposition to conclude peace on moderate and equitable principles. If this motion were to be negatived, it would be incumbent on those who opposed it, to show what had altered the course we ought to take. There were but two reasons that he knew of, which could be made applicable to this case —one was the aggression of the French in Switzerland—no man looked upon that event with more horror than he did;

* See vol. 33, Parl. Hist. page 908.—He looks with anxious expectation, &c.

but the House should remember it was the same in the case of Venice, before the declaration he alluded to. The next reason was the victory of Admiral Nelson; it was unquestionably great and glorious; but it should be recollected, the declaration was made after the brilliant victory of Lord Duncan. The last objection to this motion, he believed, was that it might operate as a notice to France, that we could not longer co-operate with our allies—he thought we certainly should, in the first instance, seek an honourable peace; but if we were to co-operate, we should co-operate only as we hitherto had done, most effectually by our naval exertions. He protested against the sending of troops to the continent, and against sending to any of the powers any pecuniary assistance whatever, either under the title of loan, subsidy, or otherwise. He differed from those gentlemen who might think this an unfavourable moment to proclaim our pacific dispositions. Our finances were in a state to excite the deepest anxiety. In six years we added one hundred and fifty millions to our debt, by which we had created the necessity of adding to our annual burdens eight millions—a sum equal to the whole of our expenditure when the present monarch ascended the throne. Let us consider also our situation at home—the Habeas Corpus Act was suspended; besides, notwithstanding all the efforts to curb and repress rebellion in Ireland, further exertions were necessary for that purpose. If we looked to our establishments in the East, we would see these very large and expensive. Then look at the West Indies: and here the first thing that presented itself was the evacuation of St. Domingo; within a few hours sail of our West India colonies, there was a force

of no less than fifty thousand Blacks, disciplined and trained to arms. The enemy had, if not the first, certainly the most successful general in Europe. Under these circumstances, and considering that we had been engaged in what was called the common cause, for no determinate object that he could see, it was time for us to have some separate care of ourselves. The honourable gentleman concluded with moving :—

" That it is the duty of His Majesty's ministers to advise His Majesty, in the present crisis, against entering into engagements which may prevent or impede a negociation for peace, whenever a disposition shall be shown, on the part of the French Republic, to treat on terms consistent with the security and interests of the British empire."

Mr. Canning :—If I might judge, Sir, of the impression made by the honourable gentleman's speech, from the manner in which it has been received, and particularly from the unusual degree of apathy and languor which has prevailed on that side of the House on which he sits, I should be led to believe, that the ardour manifested on this side of the House by my noble and honourable friends who rose at the same time with me, was, perhaps, more than the occasion required:—and I assure you, Sir, I should not have pressed myself upon your attention, if I had thought the occasion one which demanded abilities like theirs;—if I had not felt, that what

arguments I have to state in opposition to the honourable gentleman's motion, are so clear and plain in themselves, as to require little aid from any talents in the person who states them. The motion of the honourable gentleman cannot be denied to be of an extraordinary nature; and he has certainly treated it in a very extraordinary manner. I conceive it to be consonant as well to the rules of the House, as the reason of the thing, that the House should not be urged to the adoption of a new and unusual measure, without its being, in the first place, established, that there exists some necessity for adopting it, or that some advantage may be gained by doing so. I did expect, therefore, from the honourable gentleman, rather some solid reasons for the measure which he has proposed, than an anticipation of the objections which he thought might be urged against it. He has contented himself, however, with endeavouring to destroy the validity of several arguments which he has heard out of doors, and which he expects to hear to-night against the motion that he has made; but he has omitted, what seemed to me to be more peculiarly incumbent upon him, an explanation of the motives which induced him to make it. I admit that the honourable gentleman has been not unsuccessful in anticipating several of the most obvious and prominent objections against his motion; I cannot think that he has been equally fortunate in removing them. I shall certainly have occasion, in

the course of what I have to say, to re-state many or most of those which he has anticipated, and not without the hope of establishing them to the conviction of the House. I shall follow him through these objections, as nearly as I can in the same order in which he has brought them forward.

The first objection which he expects to hear, but upon which I am certainly not inclined to lay the greatest stress, is the point of constitutional form. It is by no means my intention to contend, that the nature of the honourable gentleman's motion, though extraordinary, is wholly unprecedented,—much less to deny the power and the right of the House of Commons, to offer its advice to His Majesty, on any subject, either of negociation, or of war. I know they have at several times interfered in both. It is, indeed, somewhat singular, that the honourable gentleman should not himself have cited any of the former instances of such an exercise of the right of parliament. Perhaps he has some recollection, that a peculiar sort of fatality has, in almost every instance, seemed to attend interferences of this nature; that in almost every instance, from the Revolution to our own time, they have been either nugatory or mischievous. I will mention two only, out of the few that have occurred during this period: the first,—that which was nearest, in point of time, to the Revolution; the other,—that which is nearest to our own time; the first, an interference tending to prolong a war; the other, intended to

accelerate a peace. The first, the warlike measure, was the famous vote of the House of Lords in 1707, "That no peace could be safe or honourable which should leave Spain and the Spanish West Indies in the possession of the House of Bourbon." It is hardly necessary to remind gentlemen, that this vote carried by the heat and violence of party, had no effect whatever; that no manner of regard was paid to it, in the peace which was afterwards negociated.—And, whatever might be the faults of that peace, or however loud the cry against the ministers who made it, I do not think that any man, who looks fairly and impartially at that peace now, will say, that it was any very great crime in those ministers, that they did omit to carry this vote into execution. The second example to which I refer, is, the resolution voted by the House of Commons, respecting the "Independence of America." Of a transaction so recent it is hardly possible to speak with the freedom of history. I speak, probably, in the presence of many who took part in favour of that resolution,—of some certainly, who opposed it. Who were right, or who were wrong, I do not presume to determine. But in one thing, I believe, those who opposed and those who promoted it will equally concur,—that the vote which carried that resolution was an *unfortunate* vote; and that it had an influence fatal to the interest of this country, on the peace which con-

concluded the American war. This is a proposition which those who had to make that peace must, I am sure, contend to be true; and which those who condemned that peace would find it difficult to deny.

But whatever might be the force of precedents, they would not of themselves,—even if their bearing was as much in favour of motions of this kind, as unfortunately it has been against them, —they would not of themselves be sufficient to justify the honourable gentleman's motion. It would, I presume, be farther necessary for him to show (as was shown, or attempted to be shown, in all former instances), that some necessity at present exists, which calls for such an interference of the House of Commons. I can conceive such a necessity to arise only from one of two circumstances: either from the circumstance of some opening for peace now presenting itself, of which ministers do not show themselves enough disposed to take advantage; —or from ministers having at former periods evinced a disposition generally hostile to peace, which this motion is intended to censure or to controul. That any such opening now exists, the honourable gentleman has not attempted to argue. I must, therefore, naturally have attributed his motion to a false impression remaining on his mind of the conduct of ministers in former negociations:—I must have conceived, that he retained

a confused and perplexed recollection of what had passed at Lisle,—that he remembered something indistinctly of an embarrassment having been thrown in the way of the negotiation by a question about allies,—but utterly forgot that the allies who created this embarrassment were the allies of France, and not of Great Britain;—and that, under this mistake, he was bringing forward the restriction in the wrong place, and applying to this country, a cure for the misconduct of the enemy. But I am prevented from admitting even this foundation for his proceeding, by the approbation which the honourable gentleman has expressed of the manifesto published by this government, after the breaking off of the negotiations at Lisle. The honourable gentleman distinctly and fairly acknowledges that manifesto to have exhibited undoubted proofs of the pacific dispositions of His Majesty's ministers.

And here give me leave to observe rather a singular argument, which grows out of the honourable gentleman's peculiar conduct and situation. He tells you that he brings forward this motion as an "unconnected and unsupported individual," acting with no party or set of men whatever. By agreeing to the motion, therefore, the advantage which we are to gain is his individual co-operation. It is hardly to be supposed that he will be more convinced of the pacific disposition of ministers after this resolution shall have been

adopted, than he was after the publication of the manifesto, which he has so warmly commended. What was the first step that he took by way of co-operation after that manifesto was published? *He voted against the supply.*—Convinced, that His Majesty had done all in his power to obtain peace;—that he had gone almost beyond what could have been expected of him, in forbearance and moderation;—that he had shown, even after the victory of Lord Duncan, the most decided disposition to make peace, upon fair and reasonable terms;—convinced, that the abrupt conclusion of the negotiation at Lisle had been the act of the enemy exclusively:—that the continuance of the calamities of war was to be attributed to the arrogance, and wickedness, and pride, of the enemy alone;—that His Majesty had no choice;—that he must of necessity continue to carry on a war, which the mad ambition of that enemy would not allow him to terminate;—in this conviction, to enable His Majesty to carry on the war, the honourable gentleman, "unconnected and unsupported," individually *voted against the supply.* I do not mean to impeach the honourable gentleman's conduct in this instance. He had no doubt his reasons for it. But I do mean to put it to the judgment of the House, whether, if it should be evident (as I trust it will be) that no solid and general advantage is to be derived to the country from our agreeing to the honourable gentleman's

resolution,—there is much temptation held out to us to do so, by the prospect of his future individual co-operation; whether it is worth while to adopt an unusual, unnecessary, and much more, a mischievous measure, to evince our desire for peace,—in order to secure the honourable gentleman's vote against the supply for carrying on the war. This, however, would certainly be a very inferior consideration, if there were any utility or advantage to be derived from the measure proposed. I have not heard the honourable gentleman state any advantage as likely to arise from it to the country. As he has affirmed nothing of this kind, I have nothing of the kind to deny. But there is one way of considering what is advantageous to this country, to which I confess I am very partial; and the rather, perhaps, because it does not fall in with the new and fashionable philosophy of the day. I know it is a doctrine of that large and liberal system of ethics which has of late been introduced into the world, and which has superseded all the narrow prejudices of the ancient school,—that we are to consider not so much what is good for our country, as what is good for the human race; that we are all children of one large family;—and I know not what other fancies and philanthropics, which I must take shame to myself for not being able to comprehend. I, for my part, still conceive it to be the paramount duty of a British member of

parliament, to consider what is good for Great Britain: and where no immediate advantage is pointed out as obviously arising from any new measure that is proposed for our adoption,—I hold it no bad test to examine in what way it bears upon the interests of France, and to conclude, however unphilosophically, or illiberally, that what is good for the enemy, cannot be very good for us.

Now, Sir, I beg to have it understood,—and I assure the honourable gentleman, that I am very far from meaning any thing personally disrespectful to him;—that I give him full credit for feeling, as strongly as any man, every thing that he owes to his country, for being as ready as any man to devote his talents and exertions to her service. I appeal, therefore, not to his feelings, but to his judgment and ingenuity,—when I desire him to consider, whether he could possibly devise any measure (capable, at the present moment, of being patiently entertained by this House, or by the public,) which should have a more direct and manifest tendency to benefit France, than the motion which he has now brought forward? What could any man—any member of this House (if it were possible to suppose that there should be such a member in this House), most perversely devoted to the views of the enemy, and bent upon exalting France at the expense of Great Britain,—what more effectual measure could such a man take for such a

purpose, than by a motion like the present? For what is it that the French Directory appear, by all their conduct, by all their publications, to dread and deprecate more than any other thing in the world? What is it that all their official and unofficial papers most labour to discredit? What—but the revival of a great and general confederacy in Europe, of which England should be the animating soul? Why should we co-operate with the French Directory? What interest can we have in common with them, that should induce us to take their work out of their hands, and complete it for them? What advantage can it be to us to daunt and dispirit Europe; and to relieve the Directory from the apprehension of any powerful resistance, or the necessity of any extensive preparation; to maintain their influence abroad, and their authority at home?

I will put the question in another way. I will suppose that we were now in the last year of the monarchy of France, instead of the sixth or seventh year, or whatever it may be, of the French republic, one and indivisible. By the monarchy, I mean, of course, that cruel, wicked, profligate, abominable despotism, of which we have heard so many, and, no doubt, so just complaints,—which oppressed France with I know not what unheard-of cruelties,—which insulted England, and desolated Europe, by crimes and calamities such as can never be imputed to the French

republic. I will suppose that this monarchy had received so formidable a blow as has been given to the Directory by the victory of the Nile; —that its fleets had been disgraced and defeated, in different expeditions against the British Empire —that its fairest provinces were in revolt;—that its subjects were universally discontented;—that its commerce was extinguished;—its revenue destroyed;—and its finances, by the confessions of its ablest financiers, in a state of utter and irrecoverable ruin and bankruptcy;—that against the monarchy, thus situated, a general spirit was rising in Europe:—I will suppose that under these circumstances, the ministers of this country had come down to this House, and suggested the propriety of such a measure of abjuration and self-denial as is now under consideration: and I will ask,—what would have been the clamour raised on the other side of the House?—how pointedly would the question have been put to ministers, "What are you doing? Why do you interfere to arrest the downfall of this detestable tyranny? Look on only—do nothing—and it will fall of itself. What business is it of yours to rescue from destruction a power, so inordinate in its ambition, and so hostile to the happiness of Europe!"

Such would have been the language that we should have heard, if the monarchy of France had been the object of forbearance, and if ministers

had been the persons to advise us to forbear. I will not press similar interrogations in such a way as to impute to any gentleman improper and unjustifiable partialities:—but I cannot help asking, whether the present government of France be indeed one, which has deserved so well of this country,—which, to take the question more candidly, has deserved so well of France,—which, in the still more large and liberal cant of the day, has deserved so well of *humanity*—as that we should feel ourselves called upon to take so extraordinary a step in its behalf? And I would farther ask, whether,—whatever be the present degree of weakness or stability in the government of France (upon which I give no opinion)—whether the effect of this motion must not be to prop its power, and to come to the aid of its unpopularity? whether, with this vote of security in one hand, the Directory might not boldly hold out the Gazette of Lord Nelson's victory in the other, and call upon the people of France to balance what had been lost with what had been gained?

But admitting, for the argument's sake, the object of the honourable gentleman's motion to be advantageous to this country; it would remain to be seen how far that object is clearly expressed or understood, and how far the means which he suggests are calculated for attaining it. The honourable gentleman takes credit to himself for not limiting or defining in any degree, the nature or terms

of the peace which it is the duty of His Majesty's ministers to conclude. If he had not mentioned this omission as a point on which he takes credit to himself, it is that which I should have been tempted to select for peculiar disapprobation. It seems to me at least a new and unusual course of policy, instead of defining the end, to contract the means of action. It would have seemed more natural and more fair, to say beforehand, "Such or such is the peace with which the country would be contented, and which would be consistent with its security and interests; but the mode of arriving at that peace, is what must be left for His Majesty's ministers to devise:"—this surely would be fairer than to say, in the language of the present motion, "I will not tell you what peace you ought to make;—but I will take from you one great instrument for making any peace at all."

By this motion what advice do you give to ministers, or what controul do you impose on them? Your advice is certainly not worth much, —when you only tell them how they shall not proceed; but say nothing of how they shall proceed, or whither they shall go. Your controul cannot be very effectual,—since it is they, it seems, after all, who are to remain the judges of what is "consistent with the security and interests" of Great Britain. These interests and this security must necessarily be considered with

relation to the different circumstances of the enemy and of Europe. What might be a secure peace for Great Britain with France reduced in power, and Europe at liberty,—would no doubt be highly unsafe against France in her present state of force and aggrandizement, with great part of Europe at her feet, and the resources of other nations at her disposal. It is equally clear, that it would be more difficult for us, single and unassisted, to extort from France such terms as would be consistent with our interests, than to obtain the same terms, if backed by a powerful confederacy in Europe. The declaration conveyed to France by this motion, that we are determined, at all events, to treat singly; would naturally inflame her pride, and increase her demands. The declaration that we make no common cause with other nations, would necessarily place those nations at her mercy, or on her side. The effect of the motion must, therefore, be to diminish alike the probable advantages of the peace to be obtained, and our power of obtaining it. It prescribes a more difficult end to be accomplished, with less efficacious means. At the same time, it does not tend to hasten the conclusion of even such a peace, as with such means might possibly be obtained; for it leaves ministers at liberty to conclude no peace, which they do not think "consistent with the security and interests" of the country:—and if they should

choose to think, (which they very probably and very laudably might), that no peace would deserve this character, which should not provide for the safety of Europe;—what assurance does this motion give you against a hopeless prolongation of the war?

Sir, the hon. gentleman's purpose; if I at all comprehend it, required that he should have made the latter part of his motion as distinct as the beginning. If he had done so,—if he had fairly stated the idea which he has in his own mind,—I apprehend that, instead of the circumlocution of a peace "consistent with security and interests," &c. we should have heard of a *separate peace*. I confess, this was what I was prepared to expect. I expected it the rather, from comparing the general reasoning of the hon. gentleman with respect to *separate war*,—with what is reported to have been said upon the same topic in another place by a noble statesman of great consideration and celebrity;—a statesman, who to a life of political activity has had the advantage of adding an age of retirement and reflection. This great authority (I understand) recommended, as the only sort of war that suited the circumstances of this country,—a tight, snug, little, domestic war; in which our exertions should be confined at home; in which we should not stretch an arm beyond the circumference of our own dominions, but should sit down with our navy collected about

us, and turn round upon our own axis, without reference to the rest of the world. The main advantage stated as likely to result from this system was, that *our sailors would spend their wages at home*:—the noble statesman ought to have added, to heighten the glowing picture, that they would spend them in *exciseable commodities*. This system of separate war was evidently calculated to lead ultimately to separate peace: as, indeed, its illustrious promulgator avowed. I imagined that the hon. gentleman, in adopting the premises of the noble statesman, must be prepared likewise to adopt his conclusion. I should certainly disapprove of both—because I cannot but apprehend that a war so very like peace, would lead to a peace that would be very like war—that a contest (if contest it might be called) in which we should be afraid to employ our forces, would lead to a pacification at which we should be afraid to disband them. And this opinion I venture to entertain, in opposition to such high authority; because I think I have on my side the eternal and immutable truth,—that the objects of human desire are attainable only by human exertion;—that never yet did inaction beget repose, or a want of energy and spirit secure permanent and unmolested tranquillity.

The system of separation, however, is defended upon another ground. It is conceded with great candour, that the conduct of France is very bad;

but it is at the same time contended, that the other powers of Europe are very bad too; and that the less we have to do with either of them, the better. I must take leave, Sir, in the first place, to observe upon the affectation which has grown up among those who argue against the war, of pairing off the enormities of France against the imputed crimes of regular governments. No sooner is any fresh act of atrocity, cruelty, perfidy, or injustice on the part of the French Republic brought forward in argument, than recourse is had to some stale trite topic of declamation, which has been used a hundred and a hundred times against Russia, Prussia, Austria, or the old government of France. During Robespierre's reign, the favourite *pair* for every one of his noyades, and fusillades, his crowded dungeons, and sweeping executions,—was the imprisonment of La Fayette! The partition of Poland, too!—(a measure which I have no thoughts of justifying) against how many detestable, impious, and tyrannical outrages, invasions, confiscations, rapines, and massacres of the French government, has not the partition of Poland been cited as a parallel! It has really, Sir, been called into service so often, that it ought no longer to be considered as a *pair*. It is time to agree, that at least in any future enormities of France, she shall not have a set-off in the partition of Poland.

But after all, to what does this argument at

best amount? The world is a bad world, and we are, therefore, to withdraw ourselves from it. Good:—if this were, indeed, practicable; if it remained for us to choose whether we would make a part of this world or no;

> "If Heav'n would make us such another world
> Of one entire and perfect chrysolite,"——

where all should be pure, and perfect, and without a flaw. But if we are, in spite of ourselves, compelled to belong to the world in which we are placed, I know not whether it be not more manly, more statesman like, and more virtuous, too, to make the best of it;—to do what we can with the materials which we have; and to endeavour to work out our own happiness, even though we should not be able to separate and disconnect it from the happiness of our fellow creatures.

I think this a more rational conduct than the sort of national secession which the hon. gentleman's motion goes to recommend. I know of no justifiable reason for such a secession,—I can conceive no motive for it, consistent with true sense of right, and just dignity of character. I know not how we could reconcile it to ourselves (if it were practicable) to withdraw into gloomy solitude, and "grim repose:" while we have talents which God has given us for the benefit of our fellow-creatures, and while we have a station which

affords us an opportunity of employing those talents to that purpose. It is not under such circumstances that I can conceive it to be excusable, to indulge a whim, and fretfulness, and peevishness of temper, from personal spleen and petty resentment, because every thing does not go exactly as we would have it. I can conceive no cause, except sullen discontent, and disappointed ambition, which could lead us to abjure communion with mankind. For discontent, as a nation, God be thanked we have no ground! Ours has been a generous ambition, and it has not been disappointed so far as we are ourselves concerned; but it looks to larger and more elevated objects, —to the peace and prosperity of the world. If, indeed, the full gratification of ambitious views were a sufficient reason for retirement, we might fairly and proudly retire, and say, with truth and confidence, that we have acted our part. If we had undertaken the war for territorial aggrandizement,—if we had been impelled to it by a thirst of naval glory,—we might, indeed, sit down contented with our conquests, when there is scarcely any thing left for us to acquire, we might pause, satiated with victory, when we have no longer an enemy to subdue. But we did not undertake the war for these objects. Undertake it, indeed we did in no sense: it was forced upon us by the aggression and ambition of our enemy: we were compelled to engage in it for our safety and de-

fence,—not in local, partial, and insulated points, but in those points in which our safety is connected and bound up with the safety, honour, and interests of Europe.

"But what," say the gentlemen on the other side of the House, "is the distinct *object* for which we are engaged?"—Gentlemen put this question,—as if an *object* were a corporeal substance, as if it was something tangible, something that could be taken in the hand and laid upon your table, and turned round and round before them for accurate, ocular examination. In this sense I profess myself perfectly unable to satisfy them. But do they mean something less precise than this, (though scarcely less so)—the statement of some one distinct term, the obtaining of which is to be settled before-hand as a *sine quâ non* condition of peace? If they do mean this, are they really prepared to argue that such a statement, supposing it could be made, would be politic, would be prudent,—particularly with a view to the facilitating or accelerating a pacification? Do they not believe,—is it not evident,—that if it had any effect, it would have an effect exactly the contrary? Do they think that the resolution of 1707, for instance, to which I have already referred, had a tendency to promote, or to retard peace? That resolution, indeed, we know was not adhered to. Was it then politic to have passed it? Or, would the gentlemen be con-

tented with the statement of an *object* to which we did not mean to adhere? Would they gain any thing by this? Would this give facility to peace, or vigour to war? Would it contribute to any possible purpose that could be in any way beneficial to the country?

That we have objects, great and momentous objects, in our view, there is no man that must not feel. I can have no difficulty in declaring, that the most complete and desirable termination of the contest would be the deliverance of Europe. I am told, indeed, that there are persons who affect not to understand this phrase; who think there is something confused, something involved, something of studied ambiguity and concealment in it. I cannot undertake to answer for other gentlemen's powers of comprehension. The map of Europe is before them.—I can only say, that I do not admire that man's intellects, and I do not envy that man's feelings, who can look over that map without gathering some notion of what is meant by the deliverance of Europe. I do not envy that man's feelings, who can behold the sufferings of Switzerland, and who derives from that sight no idea of what is meant by the deliverance of Europe. I do not envy the feelings of that man, who can look without emotion at Italy,—plundered, insulted, trampled upon, exhausted, covered with ridicule, and horror, and devastation;—who can look at all this, and be at a loss

to guess what is meant by the deliverance of Europe? As little do I envy the feelings of that man, who can view the people of the Netherlands driven into insurrection, and struggling for their freedom against the heavy hand of a merciless tyranny, without entertaining any suspicion of what may be the sense of the word deliverance. Does such a man contemplate Holland groaning under arbitrary oppressions and exactions? Does he turn his eyes to Spain trembling at the nod of a foreign master? And does the word deliverance still sound unintelligibly in his ear? Has he heard of the rescue and salvation of Naples, by the appearance and the triumphs of the British fleet? Does he know that the monarchy of Naples maintains its existence at the sword's point? And is his understanding, and is his heart, still impenetrable to the sense and meaning of the deliverance of Europe?

Sir, that we shall succeed in effecting this general deliverance, I do not pretend to affirm. That in no possible case we should lay down our arms and conclude a peace before it is fully effected, I do not mean to argue. But that this is the object which we ought to have in view, even if we look to our own safety only,—that of this we ought to accomplish as much as our means, our power, our exertions, our opportunities will allow, —I do most anxiously contend. If circumstances should unhappily arise to make the attainment of

the object hopeless, it will be time enough when they do arise, to give up the hopes of attaining it :—but do not let us run before misfortune, do not let us presume disappointment, and anticipate the necessity of disgrace!

But it is contended, and justly contended, that the deliverance of Europe cannot be effected by our exertions alone : and that, unless other powers are sincerely disposed to co-operate, we are setting out on a romantic and absurd and impracticable enterprise, which we have neither any chance of accomplishing, nor any duty or call to undertake. I perfectly agree, that if other powers are not disposed to co-operate, we have no reasonable chance of succeeding to the extent of our wishes. But I cannot help asking, at the same time—If there be no such disposition on the part of other powers, where is the use or what is the necessity for the hon. gentleman's motion? Why need parliament interfere to prevent His Majesty's ministers from taking advantage of dispositions which do not exist, and from accepting co-operation which will not be offered? But if, on the other hand, the powers of Europe, or any of them, are ready to do their part towards the common salvation, and want but our countenance and encouragement to begin; if the train is laid,—if the sparks of enmity and resentment, which the aggressions of France have kindled in every nation throughout Europe, want but our breath to blow them into

conflagration;—is it the dictate of our duty, our interest, or our feelings, to save France from destruction,—and by a coarse and hasty proceeding, like that which is now recommended to us, to throw a wet blanket on the flames?

If, however, the co-operation of allies should be offered, we are called upon to receive them with suspicion and distrust; and to be assured, from the fate of former confederacies, from the manner in which we have been duped and deceived heretofore, that no fidelity to engagements, and no consistency of conduct, is to be expected from the continental powers. It seems to me that this is rather a hard, unfair, and hasty judgment. When it is contended, that because Austria and Prussia have been unfaithful to our alliance, and have made peace at different times in a manner equally inconsistent with their engagements and their interests,—Russia and the Porte must, therefore, be considered as equally faithless, equally worthless allies, as powers on whom no reliance can be placed, and from whose exertions no advantage can be expected;—when the errors of the guilty are thus made to furnish a ground of presumption against the innocent;—I have too much respect for the hon. gentleman, to say, that he reasons falsely, or feebly; but I must say, that if I had ever happened to meet with such a train of reasoning, upon any other subject, in any other place, I should have had

little hesitation in condemning it as illogical and inconclusive. Of the treatment, indeed, which the Ottoman Porte receives, I think we have some reason to complain. Gentlemen seem to think that when they have quoted the words of His Majesty's speech, "the vigour and decision of the Ottoman Porte," they have entirely settled the question; that they have stated something obviously and palpably absurd and ridiculous:—and the smile with which this quotation is received by those who surround them must very much encourage them in that idea. They seem to think, that because the Grand Seignior wears a long beard and a long gown, and is altogether a figure such as we are not accustomed every day to contemplate,—to expect vigour and decision, or good sense or sound policy from him, is an expectation in the highest degree wild and fantastical.

I cannot, for my life, bring myself to understand where all this ridicule lies. I know not why the Grand Seignior should not take as correct a view of his interests, as any other power whose customs may be more conformable to our own. I am sure that the Declaration (which we have all seen) of the motives which have guided the conduct of the Porte, is as able and masterly a composition, as correct in principles of justice, and as sound in principles of policy, as any state paper that ever was published by any cabinet of Europe. And

if the dress and decorations of the Turk be all that strikes the hon. gentleman as ridiculous:—I know not why I should forbear to take the benefit that might result to my arguments, from calling your attention to the antic mummeries and tri-coloured trumpery of the enlightened Executive Directory of France. But I know, if I were to do so, Sir, I should be censured as illiberal, unphilosophical, and—(there is another word in fashion which I had almost forgotten)—*uncandid*. Allow me, Sir, only to claim the same candour and liberality for the Turk.

But your Turk is a Mahometan, it seems, and therefore an ally not fit for a Christian!—I do not know, Sir, but an alliance with a Mahometan may be as good as a peace with an Atheist; the sanction of its engagements may, perhaps, be as sacred, and its stipulations as likely to be fulfilled.

But he is a sluggish Turk; slow to anger, and hard to be driven into action. If that be his character, what must be the provocations which have roused him!

But then comes the worst of all:—the Turks and Russians are naturally enemies; and yet here we find them most unnaturally allied together against a common enemy. In the first place, Sir, it is a little hard, that, when in favour of France, all notions of received and established policy, and of the balance of power in Europe, are to be utterly disregarded, and put out of the question,

—there is yet to be no combination against France, but upon principles strictly conformable to them. But after all, what is there in this argument? What does it prove,—but that the aggressions of France have been so multiplied, so various, and so extraordinary, as to unite against her powers the most opposite in nature and in interest, as to make the necessity of resistance, and the duty of self-preservation supersede every narrower consideration, every motive of more particular and contracted policy.

Did gentlemen suppose, then, that there is such a magic force in the hostility of France, that if she attacks, at the same time, two powers, naturally enemies to each other, the recollection of their previous hostility shall deprive each of them of the capacity of self-defence? Did any body ever see, or hear, or read of an instance of such rooted, and unconquerable, and unreasonable antipathy? Can they conceive this in individual instances? If a man comes against me with a sword, stained with the blood of my enemy, am I therefore to make no resistance to his attack?

For our *old* allies, however, it is taken for granted, that no apology can be made. No good reason (it is contended) can be given, why *they* should not be more worthy of our confidence, more steady to our interests and their own, than they have proved themselves in the former confederacy. The honourable gentleman has antici-

pated an argument which he is apprehensive may be drawn from the change of circumstances in Europe, and from the conviction which is grown up within this last year, respecting the real views and intentions of France. This argument the honourable gentleman has anticipated, and declares he sees nothing in it. The honourable gentleman is right in his anticipation. I certainly am disposed to use this argument; and I certainly am equally disposed to differ from the honourable gentleman as to its force and validity.

I would ask the honourable gentleman, I would ask every man in the House, whether he does not know—personally and intimately know—many individuals in this country, the whole course and current of whose ideas, with respect to France, have of late been entirely changed? Does he not believe that the invasion of Switzerland, for instance, that the profligate, swindling transaction with America, that the event of the negotiation at Lisle, worked a great change in the public mind in this country? Is not the honourable gentleman acquainted with great and illustrious converts among what some persons have deemed the most able, the most enlightened, and most respectable characters of the age? And by what rule, either of justice or of reason, does the honourable gentleman propose to limit the benefits of experience to his own countrymen alone? Is it not possible that the statesmen of Austria or

of Prussia may have caught some light from what has passed upon the continent of Europe? May not Baron Thugut or Count Haugwitz have declared (though not, perhaps, in a public tavern), at Berlin or Vienna, that "France has thrown off the mask, if ever she wore it?" Would not they be to be believed if they had made such a declaration? Is there any thing that should make their profession incredible, and their conviction suspicious? Or is it to the enlightened wisdom, to the penetrating and perspicacious sagacity, to the firm and inflexible virtue of our patriot statesmen alone, that we would confine the plea of credulity, and restrict the privilege of recantation?

I, Sir, do not see the justice of such a restriction and limitation: and I confess I should try the sincerity of such a recantation by one test alone; by observing whether or not it were followed by any act that corresponded with its spirit and its meaning. It has been observed by ancient philosophers, that if virtue could be brought to perfection and consummation in any human mind, the possessor of it would still be an imperfect creature, inasmuch as the consciousness of his own excellence would weaken in him one of the first and most amiable qualities of human nature —the indulgence for the frailties of his fellow-creatures. It is, I suppose, from some such cause as this, that the gentlemen on the other side of the

House show themselves so little indulgent to the failings and errors of our allies. Conscious that nothing of French artifice, or French wickedness, could deceive or impose upon them, they cannot forgive the folly and stupidity of those who have suffered themselves for a moment to be so deluded: nay, they are hardly content to ascribe the delusion to folly; but are forward to insinuate a suspicion of sympathy and fellow-feeling with France.

We, Sir, who have not the same consciousness of infallibility in ourselves, are naturally averse from such suspicion, and more disposed to make good-natured allowances. And I protest, for one, that if the ministers whom I have mentioned, Baron Thugut and Count Haugwitz,—nay, if even their masters, the Emperor of Germany, and the King of Prussia, had pledged themselves yet deeper to a mistaken opinion of France;—if the forms of the House had admitted of their being brought to your bar, and there, Sir, before God and the country, swearing upon their oaths and upon their honour, that they believed—nay, swearing that they always would continue to believe,—that the government of France was the gentlest, quietest, purest, noblest, faithfullest, best of governments; —that it abhorred and detested, above all things, the idea of foreign interference with the government of other countries;—that the character of the Directory had something in it of peculiar

candour, ingenuity, and openness;—that they (the witnesses) spoke to these facts from their own certain knowledge,—for that they had lived upon terms of the most confidential intercourse with the Directory, and their communications had been almost entirely upon subjects of a political nature:—If, I say, Sir, such had been the testimony in favour of France, given with all the solemnity of an oath, by the great personages to whom I have referred;—I should yet be willing to allow some credit to their asseveration, if they were now to come forward and tell us, that the circumstances of the conduct of France since the time when this testimony was given, that, above all, the declarations and confessions of France herself, had completely changed their opinion; had detected the fraud which had been practised upon their judgment, and had convinced them of the profligacy, the atrocity, and the hypocrisy of the Directory. I say, Sir, I should be willing to give full credit to this penitent retraction. I should be willing even to profit by their offers of future co-operation against France. Nor do I well see on what ground the honourable gentlemen could reject such offers, unless they are prepared to argue (which if they are, on their own judgments be the responsibility, —I do not presume to give any opinion for or against such a proposition) that "no man who has once been contaminated by the communion

of French principles,—who has been drawn, however innocently or mistakenly, into an approbation and encouragement of persons acting upon these principles,—can ever again be a sound man.". I, for my part, should in such a case incline to believe the recantation sincere, and to act upon it as such;—unless indeed at the moment of making it, the same person were to say to me, "I do not, however, so much disapprove of French principles in themselves: I only doubt the propriety of their application."—Then, indeed, I admit, that I should distrust him again as much as ever.

So much, Sir, as to the particular argument, that the past conduct of our former allies ought to lead us to withhold all credit from their future professions. There is, however, another and a more general argument, comprehending alike these and the other powers of Europe; which, but that it has been stated by the honourable gentleman, I should really have thought scarcely worth confutation. We, it seems—a wise, prudent, reflecting people—are much struck with all the outrages that France has committed upon the continent; but on the powers of the continent itself, no lasting impression has been made. Is this probable? Is it possible? Is it in the nature of things, that the contemplation of the wrongs and miseries which others have endured, should have worked a deeper impression upon our minds,

than the suffering of those miseries and wrongs has left on the minds of those upon whom they were actually inflicted?

> "Segnius irritant animos demissa per aures,
> Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus."

Yet the echo and report of the blows by which other countries have fallen, are supposed to have had more effect upon us, than the blows themselves produced upon the miserable victims who sunk beneath them.

The pillage and bloody devastation of Italy strike *us* with horror;—but Italy, we are to believe, is contented with what has befallen her. The insults which are hurled by the French garrison from the walls of the citadel of Turin rouse resentment in *our* breasts; but have no effect on the feelings of the Piedmontese. *We* read with indignation of the flag of Bernadotte displayed in mockery and insult to the Emperor and his subjects; but it flaunted in the eyes of the people of Vienna without exciting any emotions of hatred or resentment. The invasion of a province of a friendly power, with whom they had no cause nor pretext for hostility, has created in *us* a decided detestation for the unprincipled hypocrisy and ambition of the Directory; but the Ottoman Porte sits down contented with the loss of Egypt; feels no injury, and desires neither reparation nor revenge.

And then, Sir, the wrongs of Switzerland! They, too, are calculated to excite an interest

here; but the Swiss no doubt endure them with quiet resignation, and contented humility. If, after the taking of Soleure, the venerable magistrates of that place were first paraded round the town in barbarous triumph, and afterwards, contrary to all the laws of war, of nations, and of nature, were inhumanly put to death; if, when the unoffending town of Sion capitulated to the French, the troops were let loose to revel in every species of licentiousness and cruelty;—if the women, after having been brutally violated, were thrown alive into the flames; if, more recently, when Stantz was carried, after a short but vigorous and honourable resistance, such as would have conciliated the esteem of any but a French conqueror, the whole town was burnt to the ground, and the ashes quenched with the blood of the inhabitants:—the bare recital of these horrors and atrocities awakens in British bosoms, I trust it *does* awaken, I trust it will long keep alive, an abhorrence of the nation and name of that people by whom such execrable cruelties have been practised, and such terrible calamities inflicted: but on the Swiss (we are to understand), these cruelties and calamities have left no lasting impression: the inhabitants of Soleure, who followed, with tears of anguish and indignation, their venerated magistrates to a death of terror and ignominy; the husbands and fathers and sons of those wretched victims who expired in torture

and in shame, beneath the brutality of a savage soldiery at Sion; the wretched survivors of those who perished in the ruins of their country at Stantz; *they* all felt but a transient pang: *their* tears by this time are dried; *their* rage is hushed; *their* resentment silenced: there is nothing in *their* feelings which can be stimulated into honourable and effectual action; there is no motive for *their* exertions, upon which we can safely and permanently rely! Sir, I should be ashamed to waste your time by arguing such a question.

If, however, with such allies as there is a probability of obtaining, with such a chance for the fidelity and stability of those alliances, as the circumstances which I have mentioned appear to furnish, we are yet to be told that there is no safety in such a system; it may be worth while to consider very shortly, whether a greater degree of security would belong to a separate treaty of peace with France concluded at the present moment, if at the present moment it were possible to conclude it. I certainly have no thoughts of troubling you at length upon this part of the subject, because there is not one word in the honourable gentleman's speech which implies the belief (it would indeed be strange if he could believe) that any peace, on any terms, is at present within our power.

But if the faith of other powers be doubtful, the perfidy of France is certain: need I

enumerate the several instances of direct and profligate breach of faith which have distinguished, or rather which have marked in almost equal degree, every diplomatic act of the French Republic? Need I recall to your memory how the preliminaries of Leoben (first granted to the Emperor to extricate Buonaparte from the difficulties of the situation into which his rashness had precipitated him) were withdrawn and cancelled by the French government, under the pretence that to claim the execution of them was to impose on the generosity of the Republic? How in their room was substituted the treaty of Campo Formio? And how the treaty of Campo Formio, after being violated in innumerable instances, has been almost distinctly abrogated and renounced in the confederacies at Radstadt? Need I desire you to recollect the fraud and violence by which the French took possession of Venice, and the shameless injustice with which they the next day transferred that possession to the Emperor? Need I return again to Switzerland to remind you, that the invasion of that devoted country was the work not of arms so much, as of treaty; that the way for pillage and devastation was opened by the pretext of superintending and guaranteeing a few *parliamentary reforms?* Can we remember these things, and yet pretend to doubt if we shall have as good security for the fidelity of our allies in the prosecution of the contest, as we could

build on the faith of France for its safe and honourable termination?

There is yet another point of view, in which this argument may be considered. Let us compare the expectations which we may be allowed to form of our allies, with the character and situation of the several allies of France. If we, in renewing the great confederacy of the powers of the continent, are weaving a rope of sand;—let us examine whether the connections of France are bound to her by a chain which nothing can loosen. If the ground upon which we stand is false and hollow, let us see whether the alliances of France rest upon a more stable and solid foundation. If the only sure foundation of permanent alliance between nations must be laid in community of interest and of sentiment, in the sense of mutual benefits, or in the interchange of protection on the one side, and attachment on the other:—let us look round, Sir, among the states which are immediately connected with France: let us examine the benefits which they derive from her friendship, and it will not be difficult to estimate the affection which they must owe to her in return. Is it in the Cisalpine, the Roman, the Ligurian republics, those deformed and ricketty children, upon whom the mother republic has lavished so much of her care,—is it in these, however, they may bear the precious resemblance of their parent, that we are to look for the fond-

ness of filial duty and attachment? Are we to look for it in the Cisalpine Republic, whom, in preference to the others, she appears to have selected as a living subject for her experiments in political anatomy; whom she has delivered up tied and bound to a series of butchering, bungling, philosophical professors, to distort, and mangle, and lop, and stretch its limbs into all sorts of fantastical shapes, and to hunt through its palpitating frame the vital principle of republicanism? Is the infant Roman republic so gratified by the present which France has made to it of five consuls instead of two, as to forget all the miseries, the robbery, the confiscation, and the blood, by which this invaluable acquisition has been purchased? Does the protection which she has afforded to the Ligurian Republic, entitle her to their affectionate acknowledgment and pious devotion? Observe, I beg of you, in what a situation those unfortunate Ligurians have been placed by her. They are forced into acts of outrage and hostility against England. We declare war against them;—and such is their confidence in the protection of France, that no sooner has that war been declared, than they come crawling upon their knees to implore our pity and forbearance! Unnatural Ligurians! if they are not thankful for such an instance of the parental solicitude of France for their welfare!

Look next at that unfortunate Prince, whose

dominions border upon these wretched republics: and ask, by what ties of gratitude is the King of Sardinia bound to his ally! The King of Sardinia, it is true, has not yet been precipitated from his throne; but he sits there with the sword of a French garrison suspended above his head. He retains, indeed, the style and title of King: but there is a French General to be viceroy over him. A prisoner in his own capital, surrounded by the spies and agents, and hemmed in by the arms of the Directory, compelled to dismiss from his councils and his presence all those of his servants who were most attached to his person, and most zealous for his interests; compelled to preach daily to his people, the mortifying and degrading lesson of that patience and humility, of which he is himself a melancholy example, to excuse and extenuate the insults offered by his allies to his subjects; to repress, even by force, the resentment of his subjects against his allies:—is this a situation in which the King of Sardinia can be supposed to derive comfort from the alliance of France, and repay it with thankfulness? Would he not, even if this were to be the extent of his suffering and degradation; would he not, if he inherits the spirit of his great ancestors, if their blood flows in his veins; would he not seize, even at the risk of his crown and of his life, any opportunity that might be afforded him, to emancipate himself from a connection so burthensome,

to shake off the weight of a friendship so intolerable?

But he well knows that he has not yet suffered all that is prepared for him. He knows full well that he is allowed to occupy even this shadowy and tottering throne, to grasp the "unreal mockery" of a sceptre, only so long as he shall be necessary as purveyor for the French army in Italy; or until it shall please the capricious cruelty of his tyrants to end his disgrace by annihilation. Perhaps the supplies for a campaign may be more readily procured by the operations of a regular government, than they could be by any new upstart revolutionary power, in a country agitated by the ferment of political change. Perhaps the lust of destroying may overbear this prudential consideration. But, at all events, the war in Italy once over, whether it be in the tide of victory, or in the ebb and reflux of defeat, that the French armies return through Piedmont, their passage will alike be fatal to this unhappy monarch and to his people; they will equally sweep away with them, in a torrent, whatever remains of royalty and of established government; and will leave behind them the same wreck, the same shapeless ruins, with which the fair face of the neighbouring countries is already encumbered and deformed.

But, perhaps, with more powerful and more

respected allies, with those whose names were brought forward with such display and ostentation in the negotiation at Lisle, as inseparably connected with the honour and interests of the French Republic; perhaps with Holland and with Spain a greater degree of forbearance has been observed; a more friendly and liberal intercourse has been established; a more honourable and independent system of communication has been maintained.

The friendship of Holland! The independence of Spain! Is there a man so besotted as to suppose, that there is one hour of peace with France preserved by either of these unhappy countries; that there is one syllable of friendship uttered by them towards France, but what is extorted by the immediate pressure, or by the dread and terror of French arms?—

"——— mouth-honour, breath
"Which the poor heart would fain refuse, but dare not!"

Have the regenerated republic of Holland, or the degraded monarchy of Spain, such reason to rejoice in the protection of the French Republic, that they would voluntarily throw themselves between her and any blow which might menace her existence? Holland once had wealth, had industry, had commerce. Where are they now? Gone; swallowed up in the all-devouring gulph of French bankruptcy. Holland once had

flourishing colonies; them, perhaps, France has preserved for her. The flag of the enemies of France is flying at Ceylon, and at the Cape of Good Hope. Holland had once a navy, a navy of strength and gallantry and reputation, a navy which has often contended even with our own, and contended with no mean exertion, for the mastery of the sea? Where is it now? Where is the skill which directed, the promptness, courage, and vigour, which manned it? All utterly destroyed and gone. The baneful touch of French fraternity has blasted the reputation, has unmanned the strength, has bowed the spirit, of the people, in the same proportion as it has exhausted the resources of the country. The spirit of the people is bowed, it is true; but let us trust that it is not broken; let us hope that, if an opening should be presented, it may yet spring up with sudden and irresistible violence, to the astonishment and overthrow of its oppressors.

Spain, however, it may be said, is still powerful, and still a monarchy; to Spain, therefore, the friendship of France must have been offered on more equal and durable terms. An alliance with a Bourbon, cemented with Bourbon blood, cannot but be lasting. I look at Spain, Sir, and it must be owned I find her still a monarchy: she has not yet received the blessings of a Directory and two councils. But, I confess, I perceive,

no one of those features by which the monarchy of Spain has heretofore been distinguished. I see nothing of power; I can discover nothing of policy. I know, that to be engaged in an impolitic war, is not of itself an unheard-of, or an unaccountable novelty. Spain has, no doubt, been often engaged, as well as other powers, in wars of pride, in wars of ambition, in wars of doubtful or mistaken interest. In an absolute monarchy, too, like Spain, it must often have happened, that, in matters of war, or alliance, as well as of internal regulation and domestic policy, the will of the prince, guided either by shallow favouritism, or by crooked intrigue, has at times adopted measures prejudicial to the welfare of his subjects. A powerful and haughty nobility, a numerous and highly-privileged clergy, may at other times, have given an impulse to the direction of affairs, agreeable only to their own prejudices and partial interests. At other times, again, the tempest of popular fury has overborne, both the will of the prince and the power of the aristocracy, and driven the machine of government wholly out of its natural course and direction. But a situation of things, in which the crown is enthralled, the aristocracy humbled, and the nation in general degraded and impoverished, not by the effects of internal struggle, or the perverse preponderance of any one party or

member of the state, but by the palpable, undisguised, and oppressive agency of a foreign power: this is, indeed, an unusual situation for an independent kingdom. Such is, however, the situation of Spain. The power of the monarch, the prejudices and privileges of the higher orders, the comfort, happiness, and almost subsistence of the mass of the people, are all embarked together in a war, of which the success or failure must be equally fatal to them all: a war, which has committed that country with an enemy whom it dares not face, and has linked it to the fortunes, and subjected it to the will of an ally, whose friendship is more formidable than hostility: a war which has brought into contempt the authority of the government, and the character of the nation; which has exhausted their commercial and annihilated their military marine: which, in precluding their intercourse with their colonies, has cut off the springs of wealth that fed the state, and the streams of commerce that enriched the country; a war, which has done more in two short years, under the auspices of France, to carry into execution that vote of the British parliament in 1707, to wrest the monarchy of Spain and the Spanish West Indies from the possession of the house of Bourbon, than all the exertions of this country could ever have effected, than all its enmity could ever have desired.

So fatal has been to Spain already the friendship of the French republic; and such are the obligations by which she is bound to it in perpetual allegiance and fidelity! But this is not yet all: the King of Spain has yet to drink the bitter dregs of misery and degradation.

Sir, when Louis XIVth broke up the conferences of Gertruydenberg, rather than submit to the proposal of turning his arms against his grandson; whatever our dislike of his former insolence, or our detestation of his ambition may be, we cannot refuse our approbation to this just display of spirit and of feeling. Fallen as he then was from the splendour of his high fortunes, and in some measure at the mercy of his enemies; we cannot but applaud the honourable pride with which, while conceding territory and dominion as the price of peace, he yet rejected peace itself, when it was to be purchased with ignominy. I think, too, we cannot but condemn the cruel and ungenerous policy which dictated the demand of such a sacrifice. But this, we are to recollect, was the demand of a triumphant enemy. Mark now the extortion of a protecting friend! The King of Spain, exhausted in his resources, and disgraced in his arms, by a war carried on at the instigation, and for the exclusive interest of the French Directory, is, in return for these exertions, commanded by that Directory to employ what remains of the strength

and power of his kingdom, for the conquest of Portugal, for the subversion of the throne to which his daughter is heir. Have we the feelings of men, and do we doubt what sentiments of indignation and disgust this outrageous command must have excited in the bosom of a father and a king?

Now, Sir, there is a story, and it was a good one till the French got hold of it—the story of *William Tell.* I think I need hardly make the application. Would it appear to us a surprising or an unnatural thing, if the King of Spain, urged and finally compelled to point his last weapon at the crown of his daughter, should turn round in the fury of despair, and aim it at the bosom of the tyrant who dictated the blow?

I have not troubled the House with this enumeration, as conceiving it to hold out in itself inducements and temptations for the continuance of the war; supposing that we had any choice as to continuing or concluding it. But forced as we are to persevere in the contest, and expedient as it appears, that we should furnish ourselves with whatever means we can procure for conducting it to a termination consistent with our safety and our honour, and convinced, as I think every man must be, that the co-operation of other powers affords, at least, one great instrument for such an exertion; it does, I think, seem material, when against the system of alliances

no argument is so loudly urged as the probability of those alliances proving unfaithful and unsound. It does, I think, seem material to ascertain, whether this hazard is peculiar to our situation alone; or whether, if, on the one hand we have but feeble assistance, we are likely, on the other hand, to have any thing but feebleness to oppose. Committed with our enemy single handed, France to England, what should we fear? But if the accession of allies is to us an accession of weakness, is it not something to be assured that to France it is not an accession of permanent and formidable strength?—that if France has the means of seducing our allies, we have the satisfaction of feeling that our interest cannot be indifferent to the allies of France?—that men called on her side, and fighting under her banners, cannot fail in their secret hearts to pray that the victory may be on our side?

Is not this the case? Do we not know it to be so? Who is there that has not heard, and heard with heartfelt delight, that the glorious victory of the first of August communicated a sensation of triumph and of joy, not only to the heart of England; not only to the bosom of those nations whose deliverance it more immediately effected; not only to nations neutral in name, but who feel, in spite of their neutrality, that their independent existence is involved in the issue of the contest; but even to nations nominally hostile to Great

Britain, to governments, the slaves of the power, or creatures of the caprice of France? The presence of a French ambassador could scarce repress the burst of exultation in courts that trembled at his frown. The whispered satisfaction went round in circles, where an open manifestation of joy would have been treason; and even the vassal republics leaped in their chains.

Oh! but, however willing the allies of France might be to seize a favourable opportunity for shaking off the yoke of her protection, were we even able to rally them on our side in the outset of the contest, their assistance would be nothing worth. Exhausted and dispirited as they are, they have neither the heart nor strength to fight the battle of independence! True, Sir, they have been cruelly reduced and broken down. It is true, that many of them have been moulded and distorted into shapes so strange and unnatural, that they scarce have limbs to use, or the power of self-motion remaining; but yet, even so, they are not wholly without vigour and vitality,—

"Spoliatis arma supersunt."

The arms which they have remaining, are the arms most terrible to tyrants: their wrongs, their desperation, their desire of revenge. Let France appeal to the bad passions of *our allies;* let her cajole their fears, or inflame their appetite for aggrandizement. The foundations of *our* tacit

but intimate alliance with the *allies of France*, are already laid, in their just resentment, in their proud indignation, in every virtuous and every honourable feeling. When did such a contest terminate in giving ultimate and permanent preponderance to evil? If I do not venture to anticipate a fortunate result amounting to the full completion of our sanguine and justifiable expectations, I may surely ask, what has France done to deserve that the ordinary course of human events should be reversed in her favour?

But then, Sir, another and a graver doubt is stated. It is doubted whether, with half the world in arms on our side, the objects which we might hope to obtain, would be, in any just and politic sense, *British objects*. I, Sir, have not sat long enough in this House to remember the time, but a time I am told there was, when if I had ventured to hesitate a doubt whether or not the situation of the powers of the continent, relatively to us or to each other, and the general balance of Europe (as it is called) were objects of British concern, I should have been scouted and laughed at as a driveller and an idiot, or reviled as a presumptuous arraigner of the wisdom and policy of our ancestors. I understand that all this is now changed. I understand that the great authorities, from whom I should more particularly have expected such a censure, if I had ventured such an opinion, have entirely thrown

away and abandoned their favourite system; and are now more strenuous in decrying those who maintain it, than they were before in propagating it themselves. I cannot account for these eccentricities; but I do not presume to blame them. They at least teach me to proceed with caution; and rather to inquire with great humility from the honourable gentlemen on the other side of the House, whether or no such and such things *are* objects of interest to our country, than to state any affirmative opinion of my own upon the subject.

The honourable gentleman mentioned the East Indies, and alluded to the expedition to Egypt as having threatened our possessions in that quarter. Is then the deliverance of Egypt from a French army a *British object?* Does the honourable gentleman, or does any man, believe, that if peace had been concluded at Lisle, this expedition would at all the less have been undertaken? Does he believe that, in that case to defeat the expedition would have been equally a *British object?* And does he think that, after the peace made at Lisle, we should have been equally in a condition to defeat it? Would not the co-operation of the Turk have been then desirable, to enable us to effect this purpose? Is it less desirable now? If, by his co-operation, we are enabled to confound and expel that horde of robbers, and buccaneers, who have taken possession of his

Egyptian territory; or (what I should like much better), to shut them up on all sides, and leave them there to be quietly and gradually exterminated—is *this* no advantage to Great Britain? Was the purpose of the honourable gentleman's motion to preclude the possibility of *this* event? If, by the joint assistance of Russia and the Porte, we could sweep the Levant and the Mediterranean of the scattered remnants of this piratical armament; if the coasts of Italy were thus rendered unassailable by the enemy, and the southern coasts of France thus laid open to our attack, and the ports and commerce of the Mediterranean and Levant secured to us; are *these British objects?* Are the Netherlands a *British object?* I have heard that the dependence of the Netherlands on France, has in former times been considered as so prejudicial to this country, that there was no case in which that object alone would not have been a sufficient cause for prolonging or for even engaging in a war. I do not assert that this is so. But if there be any truth in this opinion, and if, by a vigorous co-operation on the part of Austria or Prussia, or both, we might have a chance of wresting this possession from France,—will the honourable gentleman, will any other man in the House, be the person to get up and say, "This you might effect, but I will prevent you?" If by the help of Prussia, we might hope to rescue Holland from her present

state of servitude and degradation, to raise her head once more among the independent powers of Europe, a rich, a flourishing and a happy country, connected with us by old habits, common interest, and the reciprocation of commercial advantages; will any man say that this would not be a *British object?* will any man lay in his claim now, would any man be proud hereafter to have entitled himself, to the credit of having thrown an insuperable impediment in the way of the rescue and restoration of Holland?

And yet, Sir, Holland has heretofore been thought to be so intimately interesting to this country, especially by gentlemen who used to sit on that side of the House, and whose former opinions on foreign politics I have been accustomed to attach no small degree of respect and consideration, that, if I am rightly informed, (for it is much beyond my memory in parliament) the only act of my right honourable friend's administration which has had the good fortune to receive the approbation and applause of those gentlemen, and upon which they lavished as large and unqualified praise as his warmest supporters could have afforded him, was a spirited and judicious exertion by which, in the year 1787, the designs of France in Holland were defeated (at the risk of a war), and the ascendancy of this country secured.

I cannot believe that if we were now debating,

if it possibly could be fit matter for this House to debate, "whether or no, having an opportunity to conclude a peace in all other respects desirable, we should continue the war for the single purpose of the deliverance of Holland alone?" I cannot believe that those persons to whom I have referred, holding the principles which they have heretofore professed, could hesitate to give their vote in the affirmative. If I am wrong in this supposition, I desire only to be informed, where, and when, and how, the change in the policy of the country took place? Is the ambition of France less formidable now? Is her desire of aggrandizement less notorious? Is her power less terrible? Is her hostility to this country less acrimonious? than when, in the year 1786, the commercial treaty with France was arraigned, by the same persons whose maxims of foreign policy I have already quoted, not as unfavourable to Great Britain, but as likely to take off the edge of our national antipathy against France? When my right honourable friend was attacked and reviled for having, in a paltry search after mercantile profit, wholly abandoned the doctrines of our ancestors, and improvidently thrown away the safety of posterity, by admitting the possibility of any relations between this country and France, except those of jealous rivalry or open contest; for having attempted to lull England into the belief that the ambition of France, because not active at the

moment, was extinguished; that her power because not exerted, had ceased to be formidable: that her professions of friendship could mean any thing, but to gain time and strength; that her apparent pacific disposition could be any thing but a drawing of breath against the renewal of hostilities?

If all this is changed, allow me to inquire of those who can instruct me, by what process the change has been wrought? and at what period? What is its origin and date? Did it come in with the new style? Was it on *primidi*, *duodi* or *decadi*, in what month, and in what year, of the new republican calendar? Did the old system expire in September, and the new one begin with *Fructidor?* I really ask for information. I do not mean to question the propriety of the alteration, but to get at the reason of it. I am not too old to learn. But I cannot take it upon authority alone: and that too, an authority which has always hitherto been on the other side. I must continue to repeat my old catechism, until I am sufficiently illuminated to understand the articles of the new.

Till then, I must continue to ask, with some degree of earnestness, if any one of the objects which I have enumerated, may possibly be obtained by an alliance with the powers of the continent, much more if we could be sanguine enough to suppose that such an opening might arise as would lead to the attainment of them all, as would

lead to the reduction of France within her ancient limits, and to the replacing Europe nearly in the situation in which it stood before the commencement of the war; whether or no it is possible for a member of the British parliament to entertain so extraordinary and perverse an ambition as to be desirous of having it to say hereafter, "All this might perhaps have been accomplished, but by a single motion I prevented it all?"

Understand me, Sir, however, that I do not mean to undertake that if the honourable gentleman's motion should not pass, all this will therefore be accomplished. We are debating now, not whether or no such and such exertions will lead to such and such results, but whether or no we shall gratuitously throw away the only chance which we have for the exertions being made. The honourable gentleman does not affirm that Europe cannot be saved; he only desires that we may have no share, that we may give no encouragement for saving it. In answer to such a proposition, it is not necessary for me to argue (what is not denied) that the success of the experiment is probable: it is only necessary for me to ask, whether its success is so improbable, and its nature so uninteresting, that you will determine before-hand that it ought not to be tried?

The honourable gentleman, however, for his part declares, that he "washes his hands of the whole business." The honourable gentleman has a

habit, Sir, (which I do not mention to disapprove it) of appealing to the testimony of his conscience, and of holding out to his opponents the miseries which must accrue from "pillows stuft with thorns." Has the honourable gentleman ever considered the present situation of Switzerland in this point of view? And is he so eager to "wash his hands" of any share in her possible emancipation? Is it necessary as a balm to his conscience? Will it strew his pillow with roses, to be able to say to himself, "If the people of Switzerland succeed in breaking the galling fetters of an intolerable and bloody tyranny, thank God, I have given no aid to their efforts! I can lay my hand upon my heart and declare, that for aught I would have done for them, or would have encouraged them to do for themselves, the Swiss should have continued to groan in bitterness of sorrow, in abasement and despair. Fight your own battles, miserable Swiss!—England has no sympathy with your sufferings!—Bind tighter their fetters, sanguinary Directory!—You have nothing to dread from English interference!

——"Bleed, bleed, poor country!
Great tyranny, lay thou thy basis sure,
For goodness dares not check thee!"——

Such, Sir, is the language of the honourable gentleman's motion. But such, I trust, is not the sense of those who have heard it. I, too, will

appeal to the conscientious feelings of individuals. I might appeal to their recorded professions in the almost unanimous vote upon the address to His Majesty, at the beginning of the session; but, I confess when I can reach the heart and spirit, I prefer a direct appeal to them, to any argument that rests on mere formal ties or technical obligations. I might remind every gentleman who hears me, that he has concurred in an address to the throne, expressing his hearty hope that the opening afforded by the glorious successes of His Majesty's arms, may lead to "the general deliverance of Europe;" and pledging himself, in no equivocal manner, to assist with his voice and counsel in the prosecution of this important object. I might require them to reconcile, if they can, the pledge there taken with a motion which contradicts both its letter and its meaning. But I prefer going home with every man to his own bosom, and desiring him to remember, what were his first individual impressions upon receiving the account of Lord Nelson's stupendous achievement? What was the language of every society in which he happened to be conversant? The first sentiment undoubtedly was that of thanks, and praise to the heroes who had thus exalted the name, the power, and the glory, of their country, and of humble gratitude to that Providence which had so signally prospered their exertions. But next—what occurred to every man's feelings and

understanding? what was the question which immediately succeeded to the first burst of wonder, the first transport of thankfulness, the first emotions of rapture and delight? I see I am anticipated, "What effect will this have upon the powers of the continent?" This was the question asked and echoed by a thousand tongues. What then was the meaning of this question? Was it the offspring of cold speculation? of idle curiosity? No. It sprung from the instantaneous, and almost instinctive, conviction, that, in spite of all the sophisticated argument that may be urged to dissuade us from a generous sympathy with the fates and fortunes of other nations, we *have* an interest in the liberties of the continent; that *our* "assurance is doubly sure" when those around us are preserved from destruction; that *we* can be but precariously safe, so long as there is no safety for *the rest of Europe*.

Depend upon it, Sir, in all questions which partake equally of reason and of feeling, the first impressions of a good heart and sound mind are rarely to be distrusted. They may be sanguine; they may be romantic; they may represent the object desired as much nearer, than in the practical pursuit it turns out to be; but as to the object itself, they are seldom misdirected. And I believe that any man of honest and liberal feelings, who can recollect what were his first impressions upon any subject, in the consideration of which the

heart, as well as the understanding was engaged, will find that, in consulting those impressions, he has not been led astray. How stands the case in the present instance? Have we any reason to repent or to be ashamed of the wishes that sprung up in our bosoms upon this occasion? Was the impulse too generous, and must it be restrained? Was the benevolence too large, and must it be contracted? What new circumstances have arisen to vary our original view of the subject? Has England become less powerful to interfere? Has the slavery of the continent been lightened? or the tyranny of France softened or subdued? Or has some disposition for peace been manifested by the enemy? such as throws difficulty in the way of any hostile and offensive operations against them; and requires that we should rest on our arms until their intentions shall be more clearly explained? I have heard of nothing of this sort—Has the honourable gentleman? He has mentioned nothing of it. He has not pretended that *France* is willing to negotiate. He has not advised that *we* should propose a negotiation. He has indeed given it as his opinion that peace is desirable; and he has drawn some arguments to this effect from Ireland, from the East Indies, and from St. Domingo. I shall not follow him into these arguments; both because I think that they may all of them, with much greater propriety, be reserved for separate discussion in their due time;

and because, unless this motion were to be understood distinctly as a motion for peace, I do not see how they can be made to bear upon the present discussion.

But does the honourable gentleman intend his motion, as a motion for peace? Then, indeed, I should have a worse opinion of it than I had before. For is this the way to go about such a business, with any prospect, or with any serious appearance of a desire of success? If the honourable gentleman really thinks this a moment for opening a negotiation—why has he not the candour and manliness to say so? Let him bring the matter distinctly to a question; and let us argue it. I have no hesitation in saying that it is my decided opinion that this is not the moment. But my opinion is more decided still, that, if this were the moment, the honourable gentleman has chosen the very worst possible way for availing ourselves of the opening.

Is it dignity, and etiquette, and national honour, that stands in the way of a more direct attempt at negotiation? Is it necessary, in the honourable gentleman's judgment, that France should make the first overtures? I confess, Sir, I have no such delicacy; and if the moment seemed to me proper for any overtures at all, I should not raise much squabble about who should offer, or who should receive them. But if the honourable gentleman has this delicacy, mark, I entreat you, how de-

licately he manages it. He will not speak to France, but he would speak at her. He will not propose—not he—that we should say to the Directory, "Will you make peace?" No, Sir, we are merely to say to ourselves, loud enough for the Directory to overhear us, "I wish these French gentlemen would make an overture to us." Now, Sir, does this save the dignity of the country? or is it only a sneaking, shabby way of doing what, if fit to be done at all, must, to have any serious effect, be done openly, unequivocally, and directly? But I beg the honourable gentleman's pardon: I misrepresent him; I certainly do. His motion does not amount even to so much as I have stated. He begins farther off. The soliloquy which he prompts us by his motion is no more than this—"We must continue to make war against France, to be sure—and we are sorry for it, but we will not do it as if we bore malice. We will not make an ill-natured, hostile kind of war any longer—that we won't. And who knows, but, if they should happen to overhear this resolution, as the Directory are good-natured at bottom, their hearts may soften and grow kind towards us—and then they will offer to make a peace!" And thus, Sir, and thus only, is the motion a motion for peace.

But the honourable gentleman reproaches His Majesty's ministers that they have lost all their pacific dispositions; that they are become in-

veterately and incurably warlike; that the spirit of moderation, which he so much commended in the manifesto of last year, is evaporated; and that, however they may have stood out against Lord Duncan's victory, that of Lord Nelson has intoxicated and inflamed them to madness.

That the confidence of the country is indeed high, I am happy to acknowledge; and that the government partakes the spirit of the people, I am equally willing to believe. But that this spirit has started suddenly out of the late victory, and is exclusively to be attributed to it, I cannot agree. It was confirmed, indeed, by that victory, a victory which would have created a spirit if it had not found one. But that the spirit existed before the event of the first of August, is no derogation to the glory of that day, and is a proud accession of dignity to the character of the country. It adds new lustre to the character of the country; it places in a more conspicuous light the talents and reputation of Lord Nelson, that before we were in possession of the confidence which grew out of his victory, we had the confidence to presume it.

Let us recollect only the days and months of anxiety which we passed, before the intelligence of that memorable event had reached us. It was an anxiety, not of apprehension, but of impatience. Our prayers were put up, not for success, but for an opportunity of deserving it: we asked,

not that Nelson might conquer Buonaparte, but that Buonaparte might not have the triumph of deceiving and escaping him; not that we might gain the battle, but that we might find the enemy: for the rest we had nothing to fear—

"Concurrant pariter cum ratibus rates;
Spectent Numina Ponti, et
Palmam, qui meruit, ferat!"

Standing, then, in our present proud and exalted situation, fortified by that confidence which has its foundation in the good sense, the spirit, the unexampled prosperity of the nation, and which, by the blessing of Providence, the signal and glorious successes of our arms have established and confirmed, what is the best advantage that can be made of such a situation? "Hoard up your safety for your own use," says the motion of the honourable gentleman. "Lend a portion of it to other nations, that it may be returned to you tenfold, in the preservation and security of the world,"—is the dictate of a larger, and, I think, a sounder policy.

But the nations of the continent, the honourable gentleman will tell us, stood by, while we were engaged in a struggle in which our very existence was at stake, without offering any assistance, or manifesting any interest in our preservation: undoubtedly, so they did: and

undoubtedly, as the honourable gentleman insinuates, our revenge is now in our power. We may tell those, who abandoned us at that moment of peril, that it is now our turn to take breath, while they are contending; that to us is now the respite, and to them the toil; that as they left us contentedly to our fate, we consign them unpityingly to theirs. We may do this in strict retaliation: but I think a British House of Commons will feel that we have a nobler vengeance in our power. We have it in our power to say to the nations of Europe: "You deserted us at our utmost need; but the first use that we make of our prosperity is, to invite you to partake of it. We disdained to call you in, reluctant as you appeared, to share our danger; but, we are now, by our own exertions, secure; come now, and take shelter under our security."

Sir, they were wise words that were spoken by a great statesman and orator of ancient times, under circumstances not wholly unlike the present circumstances of the world. "If by any superhuman testimony, for to such a paradox no testimony merely human could possibly obtain belief, if by an angel from Heaven I were to be assured, that the farther the enemy pushed his conquests over other countries, the more territory he acquired—the more governments he subverted—the more nations he subdued,—by so much the

more quiet, the more harmless, the more friendly neighbour he would be to this country: I protest that I would not, even with this view, and under these conditions, consent to give my vote for the slavery of Europe. But if there be no man upon earth who will venture to assert so monstrous a proposition; if the very reverse of all this be demonstrably true; if every step that the enemy takes upon the continent be a step to the accomplishment of our destruction; if every city that he ransacks, every district that he acquires, be a fund of wealth and a levy of soldiers, to be employed hereafter in an exterminating war against us: then, in God's name, to what do we look? or wherefore are we hesitating?"

Since, then, Sir, this motion appears to me to be founded on no principle of policy or necessity; since, if it be intended for a censure on ministers, —it is unjust; if for a controul,—it is nugatory: as its tendency is to impair the power of prosecuting war with vigour, and to diminish the chance of negotiating peace with dignity, or concluding it with safety; as it contradicts, without reason, and without advantage, the established policy of our ancestors; as it must degrade in the eyes of the world the character of this country; as it must carry dismay and terror throughout Europe; and, above all, as it must administer consolation, and hope, and power, and confidence

to France; I shall give it my most hearty and decided negative.

Mr. Jekyll supported the motion. That glorious achievement, the victory of the Nile, as his honourable friend (Mr. Canning) had stated, produced a sensation of joy; but the sensation of joy it occasioned, was combined with the hope that it might tend to the restoration of peace. He protested against the propriety of this country embarking upon the ocean of continental politics, and of its entering the lists in foreign warfare, without our knowing the purposes for which we were engaged, or the extent to which we may be involved. The motion was negatived.

THE KING'S MESSAGE RELATIVE TO AN UNION WITH IRELAND.

JANUARY 22nd, 1799.

Mr. Secretary Dundas presented the following message from His Majesty.

"George R.

"His Majesty is persuaded that the unremitting industry, with which our enemies persevere in their avowed

design of effecting the separation of Ireland from this kingdom, cannot fail to engage the particular attention of parliament, and His Majesty recommends it to this House to consider of the most effectual means of counteracting, and finally defeating, this design; and he trusts, that a review of all the circumstances which have recently occurred, joined to the sentiment of mutual affection and common interests, will dispose the parliaments of both kingdoms to provide, in the manner which they shall judge most expedient, for settling such a complete and final adjustment as may best tend to improve and perpetuate a connection, essential for their common security, and to augment and consolidate the strength, power, and resources, of the British empire. G. R."

Mr. Secretary Dundas, the following day, presented to the House, by His Majesty's command, "copies and extracts of papers, containing secret information received by His Majesty's Government, relative to the proceedings of different persons and societies, in Great Britain and Ireland, engaged in a treasonable conspiracy, and to the design carried on by our enemies in concert with such persons and societies, for effecting the separation of Ireland from this kingdom, sealed up." On the order of the day, for taking into consideration His Majesty's message of yesterday being read, the right honourable gentleman said, he did not consider it necessary, on the present occasion, to do more than simply to move an address of thanks to His Majesty, for his gracious communication, stating, that the House

would take the subject into their serious consideration. On a future occasion, after the House had leisure to reflect on the matter, and to peruse the documents now laid before them, it would be time enough to enter into any discussion. He concluded by moving an address, " To thank His Majesty for his most gracious message, and to assure His Majesty, that the House would avail itself of every opportunity to improve and perpetuate the connection, between Great Britain and Ireland; and that they would not fail to enter on this consideration, with the diligence and attention which its transcendent importance demanded."

Mr. Sheridan declared, that he was not of opinion that nothing more was now necessary, than to return thanks for His Majesty's gracious communication. Within no very long period, a solemn, entire, and " final adjustment," had taken place between Great Britain and Ireland—it was incumbent on those who now came forward with a new proposal of adjustment, to shew the House that the last solemn and final adjustment had not answered the purposes for which it was intended. Before any new plan of such magnitude, as that which was known to be in agitation, could be entertained, it ought to be made manifest, that some new contract was necessary. He was struck with this consideration more forcibly, when he thought of the declaration of the Irish parliament, sanctioned by that House. The resolution demanded particular attention: it was " To represent to His Majesty, that the subjects of Ireland, are entitled to a free constitution; that, the imperial crown of Ireland, is inseparably annexed to the crown

of Great Britain, on which connection the happiness of both kingdoms essentially depends; but, that the kingdom of Ireland is a distinct dominion, having a parliament of her own, the sole legislature thereof; that there is no power whatsoever competent to make laws to bind this nation, except the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland, upon which exclusive right of legislation we rely, and which we are determined, in every situation of life, to assert and maintain." When he found a declaration so clear and forcible as that, he felt justified in demanding some explanation why it was now to be abandoned. His opinion was, that the question should be met at the outset, and canvassed in the very first shape in which it appeared. On former occasions, affected delicacy was observed by ministers, when the affairs of Ireland were the subject of discussion. "What," said they, "beware of touching the jealous spirit of independence by which Ireland is actuated!" That trembling delicacy seemed now, however, to be completely removed. Without explanation, they now came forward with a plan, by which the independence, and separate existence of Ireland, was to be annihilated. He sincerely believed that ministers thought the measure, which they proposed, to be for the real interests of Ireland, and of the empire; that they pressed it, in order to continue a connection, which he, as well as they, considered essential to the prosperity, and to the existence of both. He claimed it equally from their justice, to believe that he was as little likely as themselves, to promote any measure by which the connection could be affected, or to encourage those who would unite Ireland in a fatal con-

nection with the rapacious and foreign foe. The enemy, we are told, persevere in their design of effecting a separation. What, then, was the course which ministers pursued to defeat the attempt? In this state of things, after a rebellion newly extinguished, they came forward with a proposition calculated to cherish the hopes of those who had long pursued rebellion, and to divide those, by whose exertions rebellion had been subdued. He did indeed hope, that after the glorious achievements of our seamen, after the defeats which the enemy received at their attempt of invasion, they would have abandoned their design. When he found, however, those who aided to protect their country from rebellion and hostile attack, treated as unworthy of confidence; when he saw some of the oldest and most faithful servants of the crown dismissed from their employments, was it wonderful that their hopes should be revived, and their design pursued? In the message, the word Union was not mentioned. The right honourable gentleman would not, however, surely intrench himself behind a point of form. Every one knew that the terms were, to a considerable extent, already fixed. The object of the amendment he would propose, was not to prevent discussion, for he had no objection that the subject should be fully discussed, both here and in Ireland; but, to prevent the attempt from being carried into effect in the present situation of affairs. He would first assume a position, to establish which no argument was necessary, that separation would be ruin to both countries—ruin more or less rapid; but, that a connection of Ireland with France, was the worst alternative that could

be supposed, and pregnant with immediate destruction. The next point he would endeavour to establish, was that an union at present, without the unequivocal sense of the Irish people in its favour,—that an union effected by corruption, by intimidation, by intrigue, would ultimately tend to endanger the connection between the two countries. In the next place, he would ask, was it possible that Ireland, in the present circumstances, could act as a free nation upon this most important subject? If those who proposed the scheme, considered the means by which it was to be carried as nothing, they may think the present opportunity very favourable to their views. Would they follow the advice of a certain official pamphleteer (Mr. E. Cooke,) who recommended them to profit by the example of the old volunteers, who took advantage of the embarrassments of this country, and retort upon the people of Ireland their own game? Would they avail themselves of the weakness, the present embarrassment of Ireland, which the person alluded to, stated to be considerations so favourable to the project? If any man could be so mean, as to pursue this unworthy policy, what would be the situation of Ireland, what would be the feelings of Irishmen, if they could say to England, "You took up our cause in a moment of difficulty and danger, you assisted us with your force and your resources, but at last you took advantage of our weakness. With forty thousand of your troops in the bosom of our country, you did not wait a willing consent, but carried into effect an union upon which we could not exert an independent choice." Should any future rebellion occur, he would not

say that it would be justified, but its pretences would have a colour and plausibility far different from the last. Would they not say,—" We rise to recover our independence, our separate existence, of which we have been deprived without our consent?" The last insurrection was supported partly by the catholic, partly by the presbyterian, partly by the wild republicans; but the pretence of a future insurrection would address itself to all equally, and be recommended as a struggle for independence unjustly taken away. Such would be the consequences of an union effected in the present circumstances. After three centuries of impolicy towards Ireland, it was a shame and a scandal for England to call upon Ireland, sixteen years after her rights were confirmed, to resign that parliament to which she was indebted for the attainment of her just claims. But a rebellion has taken place. Here, again, the Irish parliament is not only exempted from reproach, but congratulated that by their wisdom, vigilance, and ability, domestic treason and foreign invasion have been disconcerted and defeated.— The honourable gentleman proceeded to animadvert on the conduct of the Lord Lieutenant, who extended the system of removal to all persons in office, who were unwilling to concur in the projected measure of union. Under such circumstances, could it be said that free-will or choice was allowed? This projected adjustment, therefore, would only unite two bodies, leaving the minds separate. He would be glad to know, what would be said of France, were she thus to carry into effect an union not by shameless oppression of a neutral state, but of one connected with her by

the dearest ties, one whose subjects were bleeding in her cause in every quarter of the globe? If the French Directory dismissed all, who ventured to dissent from their measures, would you not deride the man who should call such a union—the union of consent and of free choice? We hear French principles reprobated, let us be careful at the same time to avoid French practices. The honourable gentleman proceeded to comment on the pamphlet of Mr. Cooke, which he termed a pert, flimsy, and offensive performance: it contained, among other absurd arguments, the following very inconsistent one, with a view of recommending the union to the catholic, as well as to the protestant part of the community. To the protestants, he says, that the only chance of their being able finally to overcome the importunity of catholic claims, is from the character of the British parliament: while, to the catholics, he held out the temptation of their claims being there admitted. Another argument of the secretary was, that the legislatures may differ. Was not experience, however, against this argument? He instanced the commercial regulations, and the regency. As to the commercial regulations, they were rejected in Ireland, as containing conditions derogatory to her independence. In the case of the regency, the difference was not in principle, but merely in the degree of restriction which was to be imposed on the executive government. Besides, he would ask, what probability was there that the two legislatures should now differ, when unity of councils was more than ever necessary to both. The honourable gentleman further remarked upon the physical

impossibility of many members of that House, in the event of an union, consulting with their constituents; he denied that the Irish parliament had the right to resolve, that instead of going back to their constituents, they should form part of a foreign legislature; and contended that a union would tend obviously to render Ireland worse, by giving an application and direction to property less favourable than at present to its interests. Mr. Sheridan then moved an amendment, by adding at the end of these words, "At the same time, to express the surprise and deep regret with which this House now, for the first time, learns from His Majesty, that the final adjustment which, upon His Majesty's gracious recommendation, took place between the two kingdoms, in the year 1782, and which, by the declaration of the parliaments of both countries, placed the connection between them upon a solid and permanent basis, has not produced the effects expected from that solemn settlement: and farther, humbly to express to His Majesty, that His Majesty's faithful Commons having strong reason to believe, that it is in the contemplation of His Majesty's ministers to propose a union of the legislatures of the two kingdoms, notwithstanding the said final and solemn adjustment, feel it to be their bounden duty, impressed, as they are, with the most serious apprehension of the consequences of such a proceeding at this time, to take the earliest opportunity humbly to implore His Majesty not to listen to the counsels of those who shall advise or promote such a measure at the present crisis, and under the present circumstances of the empire."

MR. CANNING.—If, Sir, my honourable friend who proposed this amendment, had confined himself in his speech to the single topic which he announced as the main foundation of his objections to the address, that of the impropriety of the time at which the subject of the king's message has been brought forward, I should have felt, that upon that topic alone I must have differed widely from him. But, I confess, that the opposition which I feel myself bound to give to the amendment, rests equally on the more general grounds which my honourable friend has stated in the course of his speech, through which I shall endeavour to the best of my ability to follow him, assigning the reasons which induce me to take a view of the subject so different from that which he has taken.

Before, however, I proceed to notice the arguments upon which the amendment is supported, I will first advert to the principal ground, upon which is rested the opposition to the address; namely, the resolutions entered upon the journals of the House in 1782. To the same journals, I beg leave to refer for the refutation of the arguments urged by my honourable friend, and that reference will, I trust, completely do away the ground upon which those arguments have been built. It is true, indeed, that the words "final adjustment" were made use of in those resolutions; but, if the House will but

attend to what followed in the same journals, they will see that the resolutions there recorded, were immediately followed by another resolution, evidently of a prospective nature, which declared the necessity of establishing some more permanent system, by which alone the tranquillity and prosperity of Ireland could remain uninterrupted, and continue to be improved. A due attention to this last resolution, must undoubtedly remove all imputation of impropriety from the measure now proposed, and all charge of inconsistency with the former proceedings of the House. The adjustment which my honourable friend contends to have been so "final," as to preclude all views of farther arrangement, appears, at the very moment that it was recorded on the Journals of Parliament, to have been accompanied by a declaration of the opinion of parliament, that *something farther* was absolutely necessary.

But my honourable friend has laid great stress on the impropriety and danger of stirring such a question at a moment when Ireland is distracted and convulsed, and when the fate of the whole British empire is exposed to a crisis of the most trying and perilous nature. The House must surely remember, and my honourable friend should recollect, that for these three years past, those who are in the habit of opposing His Majesty's ministers, have repeatedly been calling for inquiries into the state of affairs in Ireland, though such inquiries

were not then brought within the view of the House in any regular mode, nor did they come supported by any recommendation from the throne. Nay, in the last session of parliament, it was stated as a high contempt shown to the House, that when His Majesty was sending down a message to require of parliament to enable His Majesty to avail himself of the offers of the English militia regiments to extend their services to Ireland, for the purpose of quelling the rebellion then raging in that country,—it was then stated as a high contempt of the House of Commons, that His Majesty's message, while it required this new power from parliament, contained no account of the general state of Ireland, no detail of the rise and progress of the rebellion, no call upon parliament to inquire how the mischiefs in Ireland had been occasioned, and how they might best be cured. Gentlemen then insisted on the propriety of an inquiry into Irish affairs, and into the causes of the rebellion. Now, it seems, they have no wish for any investigation, and all their curiosity has subsided. Perhaps the proposal of such an inquiry might then be supposed to proceed from an innocent curiosity; for it may be recollected, that it was then stated in this House, as a doubtful question, "Which were the rebels in Ireland?" But, surely, it is unfair to call for a message at one time, as proper and necessary, and at another time, when it comes, to object to the

moment as highly unseasonable, and not even so much as condescend to take the subject of the message into consideration.

And now, Sir, with regard to the posture of affairs in Ireland, into an examination of which, though I am not at present disposed minutely to enter, I must nevertheless place it in a very different point of view from that in which it has been pictured by my honourable friend. Has my honourable friend inquired into the state of Ireland since late events have taken place; events which are now notorious, and cannot possibly be disputed? Is it not notorious that a rebellion has existed, and that it is now checked, though, perhaps, not effectually quelled? Is it not notorious that the object of the traitorous machinations which gave rise to that rebellion, was not any partial change of men or measures, but a total subversion of the existing government and constitution of the country, and the complete destruction of all connection between the sister kingdom and Great Britain? And, finally, is it not notorious, not only from the verdicts of the Irish juries (into a comparison between the authority of whose verdict, with that of the verdicts of acquittal of English juries, so emphatically commended by my honourable friend, I will not enter, but will rather refer to authorities which can leave no doubt in the mind of any impartial man,) is it not notorious, I say, not only, from the verdicts of Irish juries, but from the

avowals and confessions of the traitors themselves, that conspiracies have existed in Ireland, which not only went to sap the foundations of the constitution in Ireland, but which were most pointedly distinguished by an attempt to effect a total separation of that country from the British empire? Conspiracies, not for catholic emancipation—not for parliamentary reform—but for the total subversion of all government, and for the complete separation of the two countries! Is it then possible to know all these circumstances, and not to feel how deeply interested Great Britain is in the fate of Ireland? Or, is it possible to avowals, thus made by the self-convicted traitors, not in recantation of past errors, but with a determination to persist in them; to avowals made, not in entreaty for pardon for the evils they have done, but in regret for what they have left undone; to avowals of a design that would have laid in ashes the pride of that capital, for whose prosperity and pre-eminence such anxious alarms are now expressed; to avowals that, though their abominable schemes have been detected, they are not as yet defeated; to avowals that, though the first fruits of their labours were lost, their hope still survived that loss; to such avowals, I ask, is it possible to refuse credit? 'After the detection, therefore, of these deep and damned plots, is it not expedient, nay, a thing of urgent necessity, to examine into and adopt the most effectual means

of counteracting the pernicious consequences that may still flow from them? Consequences that not only affect the continuance of the connection between the two countries, but which deeply strike at the prosperity and very existence of both. When such strong and obvious reasons evidently exist, for entering into an investigation of these means, were that investigation even to be proposed only by a simple individual of this House, would it not have been more proper and decorous to point out some other plan that might appear equally feasible and effectual; or, at least, to hear what was the nature of the plan to be proposed, rather than pass it over with contempt? And coming, as it now does, from the highest authority, can we reject it in a manner which could scarcely be practised with regard to the most trivial and ordinary motion that could be made in this House?

I am, however, far from being disposed to deny that the conduct of my honourable friend proceeds from the dictates of true patriotism—from a sincere and anxious regard for what he conceives to be the interest of Ireland. I, Sir, though not so nearly connected with that country, still feel the most ardent zeal for its interests and happiness; but in my opinion it would have been more consistent, not only with the love which my honourable friend professes for his native country, but also

more reconcileable with the duty which he owes both to that and to this country, to point out what might have escaped His Majesty's ministers in their earnest endeavours to hit upon some effectual remedy for the evils that confessedly exist in Ireland; or, at least, to have waited, in the first instance, to know what are the particulars of that measure, which he is so anxious the House should reject without hearing. My honourable friend and the House, must surely feel with how much anxiety they ought to look towards Ireland. The object is, indeed, most important; it is not the making of a provincial regulation, not the adjusting an internal difference, not the arrangement of a plan for the balancing of parties—the object is nothing less than to secure Ireland to us and to herself, and thereby to promote the happiness and security of the whole empire.

In default, then, of any plan which my honourable friend's sagacity might devise, I must look to the collected sense of Ireland itself, and see what are the opinions on this important subject, entertained by those of that country who are acknowledged to be the most enlightened and best instructed: and who are most thoroughly acquainted with all its interests, both local and general. If these opinions were consulted and collected, I do not hesitate to assert that they will be found to favour the measure now in contemplation; and to pronounce

it by far the least objectionable that could be devised. And here, Sir, I beg leave to disclaim any intention of availing myself of what my honourable friend has represented to be the ambiguous and equivocal wording of His Majesty's message—and to declare plainly and fairly, that the measure, which I understand to be recommended for your consideration, is no other than an incorporating legislative union between the two kingdoms. In recommending, then, to the House to take this measure of an union into their most serious consideration, I should even be willing to put the rebellion out of the question. Rebellion can only be put down by force. But by what means are the agitations to be allayed, and the discords that rend that unhappy country to be silenced or reconciled? These party discords are well described in a pamphlet which my honourable friend has thought proper to treat with much harshness, and which he attributes to an honourable member of the Irish administration. My honourable friend has treated, as absurd, the arguments contained in this work, that the Union might be advantageous in an equal degree to opposite sects, and hostile interests. For my part, Sir, I confess I can see nothing absurd in the argument. It seems to me not only possible, but highly probable, that both protestant and catholic might gain by an arrangement, which would gratify the ambition of the one, without endangering the safety of the other. That

such could be the effect of an union, or rather that such is expected and acknowledged to be the probable effect of it, I am warranted in concluding by reference to the different claims and objections upon which the catholics and protestants stand opposed to each other at present. I prefer arguing from what each party has said for itself, to stating any opinion of my own, as to the propriety or expediency of giving or withholding what remains to be given to the catholics, while Ireland continues separate from Great Britain. For the opinion of the protestant party on this head, I will beg permission to quote a gentleman, a warm advocate for the protestant ascendancy, whose book I have lately read with more pleasure and more instruction than any other that has been published upon the subject of Ireland. I speak, Sir, of the ability and ingenuity of the work. I beg to be understood as giving no opinion upon the questions argued in it. The gentleman to whom I refer, is Dr. Duigenan. This gentleman's book, in answer to Mr. Grattan, contains, in my mind, the most complete statement of the causes and nature of the present distractions of Ireland. It is not only a very ingenious, but a more learned work (if that were any farther recommendation to it), it more completely demolishes his antagonist, than any controversial work that I remember ever to have read. I quote Dr. Duigenan's work with the less prejudice, as he is one of the few persons

who has written upon the subject of Irish affairs of late, without giving a distinct opinion for or against an union. Dr. Duigenan is well known to be decidedly hostile to the pretensions of the catholics: he insists upon the necessity of their continued exclusion from a share in the legislature, or in any of the great offices of the state from which they are at present excluded; but confesses, at the same time, that that necessity of exclusion would be done away by the adoption of some plan similar to that proposed in His Majesty's most gracious message. He states it as an unavoidable alternative, either that such a plan—that is, a plan of union must be adopted, or that some other must be devised for the fortification of the protestant ascendancy. This fortification, Dr. Duigenan would fain build on the re-enactment of the popery code; but he admits that this would be unnecessary in case of an union between the two countries. According to him one or other of these alternatives must be adopted. Here, therefore, we have the creed of the protestant party: it appears that they are willing to adopt an union, or, in failure of it, to continue a struggle for every thing that was dear to them in rights, and pre-eminence, and in religion.

Ask now the other, the catholic party, and what is their answer? Why, "let us have a union, or a continued struggle for that which you

have hitherto denied us, viz. a repeal of the remainder of the penal code." Here, then, are two parties in opposition to each other, who agree in one common opinion. And surely if any middle term can be found to assuage their animosities, and to heal their discords, and reconcile their jarring interests, it should be eagerly and instantly seized and applied. That an union is that middle term, appears the more probable when we recollect that the popery code took its rise after a proposal for an union; which proposal came from Ireland, but which was rejected by the British government. This rejection produced the popery code. If an union were therefore acceded to, the re-adoption of the popery code would be unnecessary. If it was in consequence of the rejection of an union, at a former period, that the laws against popery were enacted, it is fair to conclude, that an union would render a similar code unnecessary; that an union would satisfy the friends of the protestant ascendancy, without passing laws against the catholics, and without maintaining those which are yet in force. Unless, then, some plan less liable to these objections is suggested, and better calculated to remedy the existing diseases of Ireland, there is a presumption in favour of that which persons best acquainted with the interests of Ireland, and best informed respecting the contentions that now dis-

turb its internal tranquillity, are inclined to countenance and adopt.

But then it is contended, that there is something in the present crisis which renders this an improper period to propose this measure. This, surely, is strange reasoning. If an union would quiet the agitation of that country, and restore it to rest, why should we wait till the struggle was over before we administer the remedy? Surely, if two combatants could be parted, it would be wrong to postpone the interference till the battle was over. Some gentlemen, indeed, are so fond of a boxing-match, that they had rather see it fought out, than that the parties should be separated; but when it is recollected that the parties in this contest are two great national divisions, and that the prize they are contending for is the existence of the government and the connection between the two countries, it surely must be a rash fondness for the sport, that would delay, for a moment, the plan of interference and reconciliation. What else is there in the circumstances of the present time which renders the measure improper? It cannot be, that the continued efforts of France for the subjugation of Ireland have been detected and defeated;—because, whatever delicacy there might exist in interfering between two national parties, there can be none in preserving Ireland from France.

It is still the avowed design of France to at-

tempt an invasion of Ireland, and to complete a separation of it from Great Britain; and surely my honourable friend is not disposed to bar anything that may effectually interfere between France and her intended prey? Is he for waiting till France shall fit out another fleet, and disembark another army in Ireland, to meet with the same fate that attended her former rashness and audacity, before he would endeavour to reconcile and unite all parties; and thus consolidate the interests, and the resources, and the strength of the whole empire? But something is insinuated of the deliberations of Ireland being influenced and intimidated by the armed force now in the country. My honourable friend has strongly insisted upon the intimidation which the presence of that armed force is likely to impress on the public mind in Ireland. It is by promoting such an union of interests and affections, as this measure will ensure, that we may hope to remove the necessity of keeping a large armed force in Ireland; and by removing that necessity, my honourable friend would remove one of the objects of his own censure and complaint. But, in truth, the effects of that intimidation which my honourable friend so much apprehended, are not easy to discover: it surely does not seem to affect either the liberty of speech, or the liberty of the press; both of which have been pretty freely indulged in on the present subject. Every gentleman, I

believe, is acquainted with the circumstance of several persons in Ireland having declared their sentiments on the subject freely, and without any appearance of being intimidated by an armed force. A very respectable gentleman in Ireland, who fills the same situation which you, Sir, fill in this country with so much credit, and so much advantage to this House and to the public, has availed himself of the opportunity of delivering those sentiments out of doors which he could not do within, in a manner that does not savour of intimidation on one side of the question at least. But, God forbid that such intimidation should prevail. It is natural, indeed, that Dublin, under the influence of the first impression, and of the first ardour that has been kindled by the agitation of a question so materially involving its peculiar interests, should be warm, if not intemperate, in the expression of its sentiments. Dublin is as yet loud in its reprobation of the measure; but other places of note and celebrity in Ireland, places that stand as high in commercial importance, are, on the contrary, as forward in bestowing upon it their most marked and decided approbation.

There is one topic in the speech of my honourable friend which has struck me with no small surprise, and that is, the panegyric which he delivered upon the vigilance and resolution evinced by the Irish parliament in detecting the late conspiracy, and in crushing the late rebellion. Such

compliments to the Irish parliament, from that side of the House, I was not prepared to expect, much less was prepared to hear that the armed force in Ireland was to be employed to overawe the proceedings of a parliament, to whose vigilance and activity, co-operating with, and watching over the employment of that very force, for some months past, I am ready to say that the salvation of Ireland is to be ascribed. Is it then the parliament in Ireland that English soldiers are to coerce and restrain? A parliament fully armed with every constitutional power to controul that or any other army? These, Sir, are insinuations against which I must loudly and pointedly protest. They are insinuations, which, if not timely met and refuted, when they get abroad, would assume the form of broad assertions; and I should be now glad to hear if there is any man in this House, or out of it, who will take upon himself to assert, that the Irish parliament is to debate under the immediate intimidation of English troops? Is there a man in existence who believes, that if such an intimidation was attempted, the Irish parliament, with the powers which the constitution has vested in their hands, would proceed to discuss a question under the terror of an armed force?

But, Sir, my honourable friend wandered from the limits to which he promised to confine his observations, when he thought himself at liberty to compare the incorporation of the two legisla-

tures, with the incorporations made by France, for the farther aggrandizement of her already gigantic dominions. In what possible point of view can such a comparison be instituted between the conduct of the two countries? Does France attempt to incorporate other countries, for the purpose of extending their common commercial interests? Or have the French been the authors, not of contributions and confiscations, but of means of wealth and prosperity to the incorporated countries? And have they only required of them to bear a common share in common terms, for the defence and advancement of a common cause? Do the countries which they endeavour to incorporate, resemble France in constitution and in law? Do they contain persons who speak the same language, who are attached to the same customs, who are linked together by the ties of affinity and blood? If not, where is the comparison between the state of the countries which France has chosen to incorporate, and that which exists between Great Britain and Ireland? Where is the analogy between such discordant connections, and one between two countries united already by the closest ties of friendship, by blood, by the same species of government—both obeying the same sovereign, and enjoying the same constitution?

Is there any Irish protestant, however anxious and apprehensive of any interference on the part

of Great Britain, which might shake what they considered as the only sure foundations of the protestant ascendancy—is there any Irish catholic,—however galled and angry at the exclusion of his seat from parliament, and from a few offices of public trust,—however anxious for catholic emancipation, (as it is called)—who found on these, their partial grievances and general dislike to the British constitution? Have we, as yet, found those who would tell us, "Take away your boasted constitution; it does not speak our language; it is not congenial to our inveterate habits; it does not accord with the usual tone of our feelings?" No; none, undoubtedly, except those of whom I am loath to speak as part of the people of Ireland—the traitors, who have attempted the subversion of that constitution which we cherish, and a dissolution of that connection on which depends the safety, the interests, the prosperity, and the existence of the two kingdoms. The most strenuous friends of reform in Ireland, have frequently said, that they wanted only to be brought nearer to the perfection of England; and desired that they might enjoy the substantial blessings of the constitution; that they might be blest, not with a mock splendour under which they could neither enjoy security, nor thrive in prosperity, but the real, inspiriting, and enlivening sunshine of English liberty. Ireland, they know, and feel, would,

indeed, be the paradise of real blessings, if British connection could be extended there in a manner which might bring about a resemblance between the situation of the people there, and in this country.

But among all these people whom the French had sucked into the vortex of their despotism, was there one who wished for the constitution offered to them? Did the people of Piedmont, for instance, tell them, "We love your liberty, and your constitution; let us share the blessings of both?" Did they say, "We are tired of a king: give us your Five Directors—we dislike the ensigns of royalty—give us a tri-coloured cockade; we dislike our government; take away our king, his family, and those friends who have supported hi.., and who would have prompted him to exertion?" No; the people of Piedmont have said no such thing. Let the House but recollect what passed in Piedmont, in the last act of the dreadful tragedy the French had performed in that country—a beloved monarch, for no crime against his people, (to use the cant of modern republicanism,) for no breach of faith with his new allies, was ignominiously driven from his dominions, for no other reason, than, because the French wanted Piedmont for a retreat for their army, in case it should be compelled to retreat from Italy. The unhappy monarch, as the last degradation of human infamy, was obliged, *on his knees*, to beg the French to let him take his

brother (the Duc d'Aoste) with him, whom the French wanted to keep as a pledge for his good conduct. Good God! to ask a pledge for his good conduct, after they had driven him from his dominions, and forced him, poor, powerless, and degraded, to seek refuge in Sardinia!—to compel a sovereign, who had been guilty of no offence, to God, or man, to grovel on his knees, and supplicate for mercy, and compassion at the bloody hands of the agents of the Directory! Let the House consider of this scene, and then let them pronounce, whether, whatever be the result of this question, it was candid to treat it in such a manner; to compare the discussion of two free and independent states, upon a plan, calculated for their mutual benefit, with the unprecedented tyranny of France.

In one view, indeed, Sir, the incorporations of France ought to be wholly out of our consideration. It is upon a just and founded apprehension of the designs of France upon Ireland, that His Majesty has called upon the parliament of both kingdoms, to devise the means of giving additional strength and solidity to that part of the empire, which at present is most open to attack, and of communicating to Ireland, in the fullest manner, the power, the vigour, and the stability of Great Britain. If Ireland obviously is not in a condition to defend itself against the threatened attacks of foreign power, and, consequently,

stands in need of the assistance of Great Britain, it is a question certainly of serious importance, whether that assistance may not be best given by an incorporation of the two countries? The measure, however, is not forced—God forbid that it should be forced—upon Ireland; but given for the consideration, for the mature and deliberate judgment of the Irish parliament, who alone are competent finally to reject or to adopt it. Be it, however, our consolation, at least, if most unhappily for Ireland, most unhappily for the empire, the measure should not be adopted, that the British parliament has done its part towards carrying it into effect—the recommendation of the common sovereign of both countries, towards knitting together under His paternal government the disjointed members of this mighty empire —mighty even in its present state—but when inseparably united in all its parts, likely to become invincible, if not unassailable. For we are to remember, that it is not the local or military weakness alone of Ireland, that has marked her out as a prey to the arms and intrigues of our enemy. Do not let us think, that if we rescue Ireland from subjugation by those arms, and from subversion by those intrigues, by the measure at present under our contemplation, we are adopting a remedy disproportioned to the danger, or erecting permanent fortifications against an attack that is but temporary, and may be felt no more.

Much as we have been in the habit of considering the nature of the French revolution, and painfully as it has been brought home to our minds and feelings, by the experience of those tremendous calamities which have been occasioned by it throughout the nations which surround us—little, indeed, have we been benefited by the experience of the sufferings of others; and imperfect, indeed, has been our considerations of their nature and extent—if we have not been taught, that the moral influence of the French revolution is not likely speedily to pass away—that even if we could suppose peace to be restored to Europe, and the kingdoms whose heads have been bowed by the storm, or even the states which it has torn up by the roots, to be replaced in their former political situation—even under this supposition, (improbable enough, God knows!) the latent mischief, the principle of future convulsions in the moral and political world, would remain. Where is the country, whose state of society is more adapted to receive and cherish, and mature the principles of the French revolution—principles which go to array the physical force of the lower orders of the people, against the educated and governing parts of the community, to arm poverty against property, labour against privilege, and each class of life against its superior, than a country like Ireland, where the inhabitants are in general poor and uncivilized, and where religious

distinctions prevail to such an extent? In such a country, the seeds of the French revolution must be sown deep indeed! It is not, I am afraid, the act of a day, or a year, which will destroy its baneful influence. The government of France know, that wherever their principles are scattered, it will be difficult to eradicate them; they know that they have taken root in Ireland. Is it not then likely, that they will attempt to foster and support them? It is to put an end to those hopes of our enemies—it is to put Ireland out of danger, both from foreign attack and domestic disturbance and distraction —it is, in every point of view, to ameliorate her condition, that this measure is proposed. A measure, the necessity of which, arising from the causes which I have stated, argues, however, no blame to the people, or to the government of Ireland. The fault is in the nature of things: in the present disposition of property, and division of the classes of society in that country. They want commerce, they want capital, they want a generally diffused spirit of industry and order; they want those classes of men, who connect the upper and lower orders of society, and who thereby blend together and harmonise the whole. But it is not an act of parliament that would effect these great and beneficial objects; no, it is only by a connection with a country, which has capital, which has commerce, which has that middle class of men,

of whom skill and enterprise, and sober orderly habits are the peculiar characteristics; it is by such a connection alone, diffusing these blessings, diffusing the means of wealth, and the example and encouragement of industry throughout the sister kingdom; it is by such a connection that so great and beneficial a change must be effected. We have seen partial remedies tried—but, as might be expected, with partial success. We have seen manufactures flourish—but the cottage, which borders on the manufactory, remaining in wretchedness. There remains one great experiment to be tried. If, from the concurrent testimony of opposite sects and parties, we are warranted in believing, that it may be made with advantage to all; if, in addition to the immediate safety of Ireland, and the strengthening of the empire, it promise to produce in the interior of that country consequences so beneficial to its internal prosperity and happiness—surely we have heard no arguments to-night which ought to prevent the House from entering upon a discussion of the subject.

I trust that no such arguments will prevent the subject from being discussed with the same temper, the same views, and the same anxiety to bring it to a happy conclusion in Ireland. My honourable friend has, indeed, stated, with regard to the mode of proposing this subject in Ireland, that, besides force, other means had been recurred

to. Government has done that which seems to my honourable friend most alarming, most horrible—they have actually turned a gentleman out of his office. My honourable friend presses this argument very strongly, and seems to think it must have a great effect upon us who sit on this bench to talk of turning a man out of office. But what, in fact, does the whole argument amount to? Sir John Parnell, undoubtedly a man of great worth and abilities, entertained an opinion hostile to this measure. The opinion of such a man was certainly entitled to the respect, but to nothing more than that, of persons of equal worth and talents. What are the taunts which we hear thrown out against gentlemen on this side of the House, if there happens to be the slightest difference of opinion among them, even though it should be upon an indifferent and unimportant subject. If, Sir, the opposition in Ireland be as acute as my honourable friend, Sir John Parnell would have had a pleasant time of it, if he had gone down to the House a chancellor of the exchequer, differing as he did from government upon so important a question; it would, in truth, have been an impeachment upon the sincerity of government, if they had so risked the loss of a question, on which they conceived the welfare of the two countries to depend. Sir John Parnell, therefore, ceased to be chancellor of the exchequer.

On what other circumstances, then, connected with the time, or with the manner of bringing forward this proposition, is it contended that the parliament or people of Ireland should receive it with jealousy and suspicion? If, indeed, this proposition had come, after a series of attempts on the part of Great Britain, to injure and depress her sister country, to check her progress in commercial prosperity, to discourage her advances to wealth and civilization, to crush and controul her legislative independence, and to over-rule all attempts at the improvement of the laws and constitution, it might justly be entertained with distrust, and proceeded upon with hesitation. If, seeing and deploring the present situation of Ireland, Great Britain had yet suggested no remedy for them herself, and had thrown difficulties in the way of what had been suggested by Ireland, and had then come forward with this, as the first offer of her advice and assistance, Ireland might perhaps ask, where the spirit of benevolence had slept so long, and why she had never before experienced the anxious care of England, until it was now extended to them in the first instance, accompanied by a proposal for a union? But was that the case? Was this the first remedy that England had proposed, or had she ever refused assistance to Ireland? It has been said, that for the space of three hundred years we had oppressed Ireland. It is happy, however, for the

present generation, that it has but little of the guilt of that oppression to answer for. Surely, for the last twenty years, the conduct of England towards Ireland has been a series of concessions. Ireland desired an octennial parliament; it was granted. They wished for an independent legislature, and their wishes were complied with. They desired a free trade, and it was given to them. A very large body of the people of Ireland prayed for a repeal of part of the penal code, which they thought oppressed them; the English government interposed, with an opinion strongly pronounced in favour of their petition, and its interference was successful.

But it has been said, that nothing has been done for Ireland but what she had extorted, and what she had a *right* to demand: these past favours, therefore, are represented as no proof of kindness. But I would ask, Sir, whether an independent country can demand to trade to the colonies of another independent country, as a matter of right? I wish to know, whether an independent country could insist upon sending her linens to this country, under advantageous circumstances, as a right? Whether an independent country could demand the liberty of sending her goods into this country, in order to be re-exported with English bounties, as a matter of right? It was undoubtedly proper that these advantages should be given to Ireland, because

the prosperity of Ireland is the prosperity of England; but they were not privileges upon which they could insist as matters of *right*. But here, Sir, let me not be misapprehended: I do not say this as reproaching Ireland with the gratitude which she owes to England, but merely to show the good disposition with which England has, for a long time past, acted towards Ireland.

Sir, it is not my intention to go into any detail upon the subject of this great measure at present, nor to state the nature of the terms upon which a union may best be concluded. That statement, whenever it comes, it is fit that the House should hear from higher authority than mine. And this is by no means the stage of the business, at which it can come with effect and propriety. The object which I have in view, Sir, in what I have taken the liberty to address to the House, is to entreat them to recollect, that in adopting the amendment of my honourable friend, and refusing to go into a consideration of the address, they would put an end to the only great and comprehensive view that had ever been taken in this House of the affairs of Ireland. The plans proposed respecting Ireland, except in the case of the Irish propositions, were in general to answer some immediate purpose, to catch at a little popularity by decrying one party and extolling another; and by echoing in this country the distractions and disturbances of that, whenever it

has so happened that the affairs of this country have furnished no immediate ground for popular declamation.

It is a little curious to consider what was the conduct of that party, when in the government, towards Ireland, from whom the opposition to this measure comes. Did those gentlemen, when they had the power in their hands, take a great and comprehensive view of the state of Ireland? No; when they were proposing a measure respecting Ireland, they overlooked three-fourths of its inhabitants. It was then said by those gentlemen, that the work was done, and the troubles of Ireland appeased; and yet, in their plan, the word *catholic* never once occurred. Such was the wisdom, the comprehension, the grandeur of conception, that marked the boasted final adjustment of 1782.

And now, Sir, observe the manner in which every thing that is attempted to be done for the safety of Ireland, and for the benefit of both countries, is treated—What are the weapons by which every thing that my right honourable friend proposes, with regard to Ireland, is attempted to be beaten down? What are the substitutes recommended for every measure which he would take for saving and tranquillizing Ireland? Why, catholic emancipation and parliamentary reform. How came the final adjusters not to think sixteen years ago of catholic emancipation and parlia-

mentary reform? With respect to the latter, the honourable gentleman, who was then minister, directed the lord lieutenant to put down that question at all events; and as to catholic emancipation, not one word was said about it.

Sir, it is little praise of the measure now proposed for our consideration, to say that it will be more perfect and comprehensive than the final adjustment of 1782. The question, indeed, which I conjure the House not to refuse to consider, is not a question of slight importance—it is a question upon which depends the safety of one member of the empire—and the happiness of the whole. I conjure the House to recollect, What is the hazard in which Ireland stands, and what have been our fears and our anxiety for her preservation. If, in estimating the splendid victories which have illustrated the naval annals of this country, and spread through the world the terror of her fame, we have ranked, even with the most brilliant, those by which Ireland has been saved—let the same sentiment induce us to receive with kindness, and to discuss with a sincere desire to bring it to perfection, a measure which is calculated to perpetuate to Ireland the safety which is the fruit of these victories, and to procure to her solid and permanent blessings, far beyond the power of any victories to bestow!—Sitting here as we do in security, protected by a powerful and energetic government, in the bosom of a consent-

ing and united people—with no invasion to resist —no rebellion to coerce or to appease,—let us feel for the distractions and disquietudes of a country, which the ties of nature, of friendship, of common language, manners, and interests, of laws and constitutions similar to our own, bind so indissolubly to ourselves, that separation would be to both, and to each of us, destruction. And let us, at least, not refuse to consider of a question, which involves in itself the best, perhaps the only means, which can at once and for ever remove the dangers, and quiet the dissensions of Ireland, while they cement the connection which it is equally essential to both countries to strengthen.

Mr. Jones said, that the measure now proposed, instead of crushing the rebellion, would promote the distractions of the country. It possessed all the characteristics of French fraternity.

Mr. Pitt said, that the address pledged the House to nothing more than an assurance to His Majesty, that it would take into its serious consideration a subject recommended to its care, and one highly interesting to the welfare of the British empire. He would abstain, at present, from doing, what hereafter it would be his duty to do, to lay before the House the detailed particulars of a plan—the spirit of which was only alluded to in general terms in the

present gracious communication from the throne. He contended, that the English parliament had a right to determine upon this matter, and had the legitimate power of making its deliberations effectual. If the parliament of England and Ireland had not that right, as little had the parliament of England and Scotland that authority, when they agreed upon the union between the two kingdoms. If such an object as catholic emancipation could be kept in view, and be attained by calm, dispassionate, sober investigation, no man would be readier than himself to assent to any measure for that purpose. But that measure, and other measures of improvement, could be best accomplished by an impartial legislature, standing aloof from local party connection, and sufficiently removed from the influence of contending factions, to be the advocate or champion of neither.—The motion for the address was put, and carried without a division.

DEBATE ON MR. WILBERFORCE'S MOTION FOR THE ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE TRADE.

MARCH 1st, 1799.

MR. WILBERFORCE, in an eloquent and impressive speech, called the attention of the House to the consideration of the Slave Trade, and concluded by moving, "That leave be given to bring in a bill for the abolition of the Slave Trade, at a time to be limited."

SIR W. YOUNG commended the free enactments of

the colonial legislatures in favour of the slaves. It was unnecessary for the honourable gentleman who preceded him to bring forward the *Code Noire,* enacted under the despotism of France—benevolent as the letter of that code might be, and to contrast it with the acts of the colonial legislatures, acting under the free constitution of Great Britain. The effect of such representation must be, to hold out the benevolence and policy of those colonial assemblies as matter of discontent to the very negroes who had been the objects of their benevolence. With respect to the state of education among the slaves, the effect of the exertions of the colonial assemblies had been to make many good subjects among the blacks. He insisted, that strictly, the relation was the same between a master and a labourer, as between a slave and a planter. The Slave Trade, he would admit, had ill effects; but the best mode of removing them would be by gradual abolition. Let the House consider existing circumstances—an army of blacks, under Toussaint, in a neighbouring island, and the French principles struggling to find their way into the very heart of the colonies. It had been alleged, that the effect of this sort of slavery on the human mind was to extinguish intellect; *but Macrobius observed, that Zeno, and some of the greatest philosophers of Greece, were slaves.*

Mr. Petrie contended, that the abolition of the Slave Trade would be the scourge of Africa: as a planter, he wished it to take place; but, as a cosmopolite, he desired its continuance, out of humanity to the inhabitants of the coast of Africa.

MR. DENT said, that the negroes had nothing to complain of, and that their situation was more likely to be deteriorated than improved by certain speeches made in that House. The argument drawn from the paucity of numbers on the African coast, had no weight while it remained unproved, that they were not better disposed of in the colonies, than in those cities in the interior, where they had books—what kind of books it had not been stated. It would be unjust towards those who were encouraged to cultivate the wastes, to deprive them of the means of cultivation.

SIR RALPH MILBANK supported the motion.

MR. SEWELL opposed the motion. He would refer, not to the declarations, but to the acts and deeds of the legislative assembly of Jamaica, to shew their disposition to ameliorate the condition of the slave population. Was not the act they had passed, to prevent the introduction of aged negroes, a statutable proscription of habitual wickedness and irregularity, an immediate check to established and destructive prejudices, and a furtherance of natural population within the colony? Again, had not the liberal provision they had granted, and the duties they had prescribed to their clergy, a direct tendency to the moral and religious improvements of their negroes? It had been asserted, that the colonial assemblies are not in earnest, and never were. To prove this, a passage had been quoted from the address of the assembly to the King, in which it was asserted, that that island would hear of nothing that may lead to a termination of the Slave Trade. But the passage referred to admitted of another interpretation. The assembly de-

clared its motive in passing these acts, and it also declared its right. The assembly acted on a principle of humanity, uninfluenced by any fear lest the slave trade should terminate if they did otherwise. The assembly were not likely to be averse to the termination of the slave trade, if its necessity could be superseded; but they would be humane whether the trade should terminate or no; and that was a fair exposition of that address. It was said the declaration was followed up by a claim of right. It was so—but what was that right? A right to cultivate the lands we had encouraged them to cultivate and settle. If the slave trade was the necessary means of settling them, the slave trade, whilst that necessity continued, was their right. Externally considered, the effect of the abolition would be, that the trade, which was now conducted by ourselves, would be transferred to other nations, and what was now legitimate would become contraband. As to its internal operation, what must follow? The immediate abandonment of many estates and settlements—the emigration of the most numerous class of white inhabitants—and the speedy diminution of the strength and security of the colonies.

Mr. Secretary Dundas said, it was his fixed opinion that the abolition of the trade could not be effected, without the consent and concurrence of the colonies themselves. Without such concurrence we did not possess the physical means of rendering effectual a resolution for immediate abolition. We had experience of this fact in the insufficiency of twenty-eight ships of war to prevent any communications between St. Lucie and Guadaloupe, and our islands in their neighbourhood. How then could we expect that any vigilance would be sufficient to cut off that communication, when the interest and the disposition of the inhabitants of the islands would lead them to further such communication for the purpose of a supply of negroes? Seeing

the progress in improvement already made by the colonial legislatures, he thought it dangerous to push an immediate abolition.

Mr. CANNING.—Sir, The principal difficulties heretofore thrown in the way of those who have addressed the House on that side of the present question, to which I profess myself to belong, have usually arisen from the triteness of the several topics of debate, and from the irksomeness of being constantly obliged to meet the same unchanging assertions, with the same invariable and unanswered arguments. The debate of to-night has afforded more novelty than I ever before remember to have heard introduced upon this subject: and the novelty of the topics stated by the different opponents of the abolition, have been still farther diversified by the variety of lights in which even the same topics have been placed by the different gentlemen who have made use of them. Not only has a totally new set of assertions, a new train of reasoning, been adopted by the advocates of the Slave Trade in general; but still farther to perplex those who combated against them, to extend still more widely their line of defence, they have so contrived it, that no two gentlemen should handle the same arms in the same manner;—and, accordingly, in conformity with this plan of defence, there were no two speeches, no two arguments, which the House

has this night heard on that side of the question, but what were different from, and for the most part inconsistent with, each other. Not that if this novelty and variety had been wanting to the debate, I should have felt any shame in going over again the path which has been so often trodden, and meeting again the miserable pleas so often urged in favour of this abominable trade, and so often refuted, with the same weapons of refutation which have already been employed against them. The shame is not in the advancement of old arguments, but in the maintenance of inveterate abuses. It is not the pride of victory that is to be sought—it is not the dexterity of contest that is to be applauded on such a question. And whatever triumph might arise from seeing that the old arguments for the abolition continued unanswered, is in my mind effectually damped by the regret that a mischief so inveterate and detestable remains unabated.

The first variety introduced into the debate, which I shall have occasion to notice, is the variety of construction applied by different gentlemen, particularly by my right honourable friend (Mr. Dundas), and by the honourable gentleman behind me (Mr. Sewell), to the very remarkable, and, as I think, the very plain and intelligible address of the assembly of Jamaica. The House will recollect the situation in which the question of the abolition now stands; a situation in which it was placed by the motion of an honourable friend of

mine (Mr. C. Ellis)* two years ago; a motion which proceeded from the purest benevolence, and which was brought forward in a manner that reflected equal honour on the abilities and on the feelings of my honourable friend. The professed purpose of this motion was, to arrive gradually at the same end, which other gentlemen (and I among the number,) are desirous of reaching immediately—the final and entire termination of the trade in slaves. The mode proposed by my honourable friend's motion was, to address the King to recommend to the colonial assemblies to take such measures as, besides ameliorating the condition of the negroes upon the islands, securing to them the immediate and active protection of the law when aggrieved by their masters, and other objects equally desirable, should ultimately lead to the final termination of the trade. This motion was adopted by the House. It seemed, indeed, to the friends of the abolition to be a slow, and perhaps not very efficacious, mode of obtaining the object proposed. But there was no doubt of the sincerity with which it was intended to be followed up, by all the influence which those who supported it here could exert in the colonies: and as all the great West India proprietors, and all who had hitherto concurred in opposing the immediate abolition of the trade, concurred also in this address, praying for a recommendation from the

* Promoted to the peerage in 1826, by the title of Baron Seaford.

throne to the assemblies, of such measures as should lead in the end to a termination (abolition, it seems, is a harsh word—but to a termination) of the trade: it appeared that the opposers of the Slave Trade had gained at least thus much by the carrying of my honourable friend's motion—that there was no longer to be apprehended in this House any direct support of the trade; any assertion that it was a trade proper to be carried on longer than was absolutely necessary, or that it could be necessary to carry it on for ever. The only point hereafter to be argued by those who doubted the propriety of instant abolition was, whether or not the colonial assemblies were, in fact, taking such steps as evinced a sincere desire to fulfil the expressed purpose of my honourable friend's motion: to take such measures as should lead, and to take them with the intent and view of their leading, to the final termination of the trade.

If it should appear that the assemblies were taking no such measures, or were taking, no matter what measures, with no such view, the question of immediate abolition of the trade by the legislature of this country stood clearer and came forward with more irresistible force than ever. For, as it was no longer opposed by the argument, however false and detestable, that the trade was fit to be continued; as there were now not two opinions professed (whatever might be entertained) as to the propriety of its being ulti-

mately terminated; as the only doubts professed to be entertained were with regard to the best mode of effecting this termination; as the modes could be but two, the first by an act of this country stopping the trade; the second by the acts of the colonial assemblies rendering its continuance unnecessary: it was naturally to be presumed, that if the latter of these modes should, upon trial, be found unlikely to produce the effect which we all alike have in view and at heart, there could be no longer any hesitation as to the propriety and necessity of recurring to the other. That the trade must be terminated was agreed on all hands. If the colonial assemblies evinced both the power and the disposition to bring about its termination, well: those who argued against the abolition by this country had then some ground to stand upon. But how if the colonial assemblies showed either that they could not, or that they would not do any such thing? Were not those who have agreed that the trade must be terminated in one way or other, bound by their own argument, bound by every principle of fair reasoning and fair dealing, by every principle of consistency with their own acts and words, with the acts and words which the British Parliament adopted from them, to vote for the abolition by the British Parliament?

This then is the state of the question now before the House. The point for our consideration

is, whether the colonial assemblies appeared, by the papers on the table, to have entered heartily and *bonâ fide* into measures, such as were recommended to them by His Majesty, in consequence of the address of the House of Commons in April 1797, and with the intent with which that address was framed, with a view to the termination of the trade. If they have done so, I do not say—God forbid that I should!—that those gentlemen who voted against that address, conceiving the mode pointed out in it to be inefficient, and who voted the same year for the direct abolition, could be at all embarrassed as to the vote which they ought to give in favour of the abolition this year; but I do admit that in that case those who voted for that address, and who relied upon the efficacy of the measures which it went to recommend, would be fairly entitled to argue, that their experiment having succeeded thus far, should continue to be tried a little longer.

But what is the real state of this case? What was the conduct, what was the language of the assembly of Jamaica? And what are the interpretations to which the honourable gentleman (Mr. Sewell), and my right honourable friend (Mr. Dundas), are obliged to have recourse, to palliate and excuse it? The assembly of Jamaica pass two acts—very good, for aught I know, as matter of regulation—one for increasing the salaries of the clergy, the other for laying a duty, amount-

ing to a prohibition, on all negro slaves imported into the island above the age of twenty-five years. These two acts they transmit to the King, as what they have done to carry into effect His Majesty's gracious recommendation. It was hardly necessary for them to add, that they were not intended to terminate the Slave Trade; because they might have defied the ingenuity of man to discover what there was in them that could, by any possibility, tend to its termination. But the assembly of Jamaica was too open and ingenuous to leave its meaning to be found out by implication or construction. They speak out manfully. They tell His Majesty plainly, that in what they have done, "They have been actuated by views of humanity only, and not with any view to the termination of the Slave Trade." Can any thing be more plain, simple, and intelligible? Is there a man in the House, is there a child that can just read, who, until my right honourable friend's ingenuity, and that of the honourable gentleman, had been exercised upon this passage, could have for a moment mistaken its meaning? Here then the question, in all fairness and justice, ought to end. All parties are agreed that the Slave Trade ought to be terminated. There are two ways of terminating it: by this House, or by the colonial legislatures. The colonial legislatures tell you plainly they will not terminate it. What remains, but for this House to exercise its own power—

always, in my mind, the best, but now clearly proved to be the only medium through which the termination of the trade can be effected?

But, "no," said my right honourable friend; "you mistake this matter; you misconstrue the words of the assembly of Jamaica. They are not to be taken in their direct and obvious sense. These colonists are never to be understood precisely as they speak. When they say *not* with a view to the termination of the trade, they mean, '*with* a view to the termination of the trade.'" Indeed! This truly appeared at first sight no small variation from the obvious meaning of the text. And it must be allowed, that if the assembly of Jamaica spoke out honestly, my right honourable friend interpreted freely. There is nothing in truth which I more admire among the many great, and statesman-like qualities of my right honourable friend's mind, than the boldness and decision with which he is in the habit of meeting every question. There was no quirk, no gloss, no subterfuge. He always speaks his meaning plainly, and openly, and undisguisedly. But, surely, those qualities which my right honourable friend so eminently possesses himself, ought to have disinclined him to become the champion of an assembly, which had (if this interpretation be true) acted in a manner so directly the reverse of what he himself approves and practises—an assembly which (if my

right honourable friend's interpretation be true) spoke one thing, and meant another; which misrepresented its own proceedings, and disavowed its own objects; which averred itself to be shaping its course towards one quarter, while it was steering directly to another.

This would surely be singular enough, if it were upon a matter of mere curiosity and speculation that my right honourable friend had thus indulged his ingenuity. But when he gravely recommended to the House of Commons to act upon such an interpretation—when he desired them to believe that the assembly of Jamaica were sincerely pursuing an object which they solemnly disavowed—when he insisted upon their forbearing to employ the means which they undoubtedly had in their power, and forbearing, in the confidence that the object would be better attained through those who utterly disclaim any intention, who utterly deny the propriety of pursuing it; surely, when such a line of conduct was recommended to the House, even by such high authority as that of my right honourable friend, the House will pause awhile to question the reasonableness of a plan, so remote from all the common principles of human conduct, and so contrary to all the ordinary practices of human life.

But, perhaps, it was not intended that we should believe the assembly of Jamaica to be sincere in their intention of terminating the Slave

Trade, at the moment when they professed their resolution to continue and maintain it;—perhaps it was only meant that, by taking such measures as they are now taking, that is, by raising the salaries of their clergy, and limiting the age of their new negroes, the assembly of Jamaica will, in spite of themselves, gradually bring to a termination the trade, which they declare themselves so bent upon maintaining: and the House is therefore called upon to give credit, not to the good intention of the assembly, but to the tendency of their actions to counterwork their ill intentions; not to the ardour with which they would labour for the extinction of the trade, and the judgment with which they would devise means for that end; but to their ill-contrivance and impolicy in selecting such measures for the continuance of the trade, as would in the result lead, not only without their concurrence, but against their wish, to its abolition. Now, if this be what the House is to understand to be recommended by my right honourable friend, I cannot forbear asking, whether this really is a line of policy which can be adopted with prudence, or with any hope, or expectation of success, by men looking steadily to an object, and anxious for the attainment of it? Would any one in private life, who had a favourite purpose to execute, which he had the choice of, either to execute himself, or through another person, prefer trusting the exe-

cution of it to that other person, after an avowal that he had no desire to execute it at all; trusting it to him, in the confidence that the agent would effect by mistake what he, the principal, might more easily effect by his own direct endeavours? But farther, is this a fair or flattering mode of treating between the legislatures of two countries? Would it please the assembly of Jamaica to be told, "We give no credit to your professions; but we have no apprehension of what you can do to thwart our purposes. Proceed in your own way—counteract us, if you will—but in the end you shall find, to your confusion, that you have only been counteracting yourselves; that you have done the very thing that we wished to be done, and which you determined not to do." If we are to be cautioned, as the House has been, to speak with respect of the assembly of Jamaica, is this the most respectful strain in which it is possible to address them? Or is it not more fair and manly, and has not the assembly of Jamaica deserved, by the fair and manly way in which they have declared their determination, that the House of Commons should say to them, "You have dealt honestly by us. We think that the Slave Trade ought not to subsist. If you had thought the same, we would willingly have left it to you to devise the means of putting an end to it. But you tell us plainly, that such is not your opinion. You tell us plainly, that so far

as depends upon you, the Slave Trade shall be carried on to the end of time; that you see no prospect, that you see no reason, that you entertain no wish, that you will take no step for its termination. The avowal is frank, whatever we may think of the principle. There is no delusion, no hypocrisy in it. We thank you for your openness. It appears from what you say, that we must do our own work, if we would have it done at all—and, please God, we will set about doing it." Would not this be a more reasonable, and a more just mode of proceeding, than by construing, with my right honourable friend, the words of the assembly of Jamaica, in a way the very reverse of their obvious and evident meaning; to charge that assembly with falsehoods and inconsistency, in order to find an excuse to the House for its own supineness; and to reconcile it to the abandonment of its own object, and its own power?

My right honourable friend, however, could of course pretend to no higher authority than conjecture, for his interpretation. But the other honourable gentleman (Mr. Sewell), as agent for the island of Jamaica, might be considered as a more skilful and accurate interpreter of the language of the assembly; and his interpretation was, therefore, to be listened to with the utmost deference and attention; and a very curious and ingenious interpretation it was. The honourable gentleman did not venture, like my right honourable friend,

to represent the assembly as meaning the direct reverse of what they had stated. No, he knew too well the real bias and inclination of their minds, to take such a liberty with their words. But he contrived to gloss over the too sharp and prominent expression of their resolution to persevere in the Slave Trade to all eternity; to cultivate, to improve, to increase, to cherish it—this he endeavoured to gloss over by an interpretation that should do neither good nor harm. He could not hope to persuade us that the assembly meant well as to the termination of the trade; it was a great point gained, if he could persuade the House that they meant nothing. According to that honourable gentleman's construction, the words "NOT with any view to the termination of the Slave Trade," meant, "not influenced in what they are doing by any apprehension that the Slave Trade will be terminated; not induced thereto by the threats of abolition." Upon this interpretation, I will only say, that if there be one unprejudiced man in the House, who will get up, and, laying his hand upon his heart, will gravely aver, that he in his conscience believes this to be the true intent and meaning of the passage, I will give up the question. I pause to see if any man will venture to do so——

As no man ventures to make such an averment, I must conclude that the House feels as I do; that the passage is to be taken in its plain,

obvious, unmistakeable sense: that the assembly of Jamaica, while it was represented here as taking measures to carry into effect the recommendation of the King, founded upon the address of the House of Commons, for the termination of the Slave Trade, had not any view to any such termination. Such was their plain language. But if there could be any additional light thrown upon the sense of a passage already as clear as noon day, what followed in the address was in itself the best commentary upon it. The two passages, indeed, mutually illustrated each other. "The right of obtaining labourers from Africa." The right! I have learned, indeed, by painful experience of what has of late years passed in the world, to associate the word *right*, with ideas very different from those which, in old times, it was calculated to convey. I have learnt to regard the mention of rights as prefatory to bloody, destructive, and desolating doctrines, hostile to the happiness and to the freedom of mankind. Such has been the lesson which I have learnt from the rights of man. But never, even in the practical application of that detested and pernicious doctrine, never, I believe, has the word *right* been so shamefully affixed to murder, to devastation, to the invasion of public independence, to the pollution and destruction of private happiness, to gross and unpalliated injustice, to the spreading of misery and mourning

over the earth, to the massacre of innocent individuals, and to the extermination of unoffending nations; never before was the word *right* so prostituted and misapplied, as when the right to trade in man's blood was asserted by the enlightened government of a civilized country. It is not wonderful that the slavery of Africa should be described in a term consecrated to French freedom.

"But it was the right to *import labourers*"—gentle words! Not slaves, not for the world, not "to trade in slaves," but to "import labourers;" "The right to import labourers from Africa is secured to Your Majesty's faithful subjects in this colony, by several British acts of parliament," &c. They then proceeded to state in the next paragraph, that they "have the utmost reliance on His Majesty's paternal goodness, that this right should remain inviolate as long as they should remain faithful to His Majesty, and true to the allegiance which they owe to the imperial crown of Great Britain." I quote this passage particularly for the purpose of disclaiming any intention of countenancing the implication which the House has been so justly cautioned not to entertain, that the allegiance of the assembly was made dependent on the continuance of the Slave Trade. I believe no such thing. I could have wished, indeed, that the two subjects had not been coupled so closely in words; but I have no doubt of the loyalty of

the colonial assemblies. They have given ample and honourable proofs of their affection for this country. I have no doubt that they will, under all circumstances, continue to do so. And I have as little doubt that it is not by obeying their local and transitory prejudices, nor by yielding to their temporary passions, but by consulting and securing their permanent interest, honour, and happiness, that Great Britain will best deserve, and most effectually secure, their connection and attachment.

But whatever might be the general credit which I am willing to give to the legislature of Jamaica, for its readiness to acknowledge the paternal and superintending care of the British Parliament: when I hear such acts of that legislature as are now on the table of the House, quoted as substantial proofs of their intention to carry into effect the declared opinion of the British Parliament, that measures ought to be taken for the termination of the Slave Trade (an intention which the legislature of Jamaica itself unequivocally disclaimed), I cannot refrain from expressing a sentiment both of astonishment and indignation. "Never mind their declarations," said the honourable gentleman, the agent for Jamaica, "look to their acts." I look to their acts; and what do I find? A better maintenance secured to their parochial clergy—good. What has this to do with the termination of the Slave Trade? But

what more? An act imposing a duty, amounting to prohibition, upon the importation of slaves above twenty-five years old. This too is good, and I thank the honourable gentleman for calling upon me to examine it; but it is good, only as it proves the utter falsehood and futility of almost every argument upon which the propriety of the Slave Trade has ever been attempted to be defended, and the impossibility of abolishing it attempted to be proved, from the first discussion of the subject up to the present hour.

First, then, here is a duty amounting to a prohibition. So it is possible to prohibit then? And all the arguments that the House has been in the habit of hearing, how vain and fruitless it would be to endeavour to establish Custom-house regulations, which should restrict the trade, or prevent contraband importation,—all these arguments were overthrown from their foundation by a single phrase of the legislative assembly of Jamaica. But would it be said, that though to prohibit importation altogether would be impossible, to limit it within certain bounds, taking the age of the negroes for your rule, would be very easy and practicable? This might be so, but it certainly does not strike one at the first view, as creating an additional facility, but rather an additional difficulty, that the Custom-house officer was directed to prevent, not the importation of negroes, but the importation of negroes above twenty-five years

old. For how, after all, was this to be known? Was it in Africa that the age was to be ascertained? By what species of parish register? By what testimony, verbal or written? Or was there some mark of mouth by which the age of those unfortunate beings was to be distinguished? Or rather, was not the whole regulation known and felt to be nugatory? And if such a regulation had been proposed by the friends of the abolition, would it not have been met with scorn and mockery, and answered merely by a sally against the ignorance and temerity of speculative reasoners upon practical subjects?

But, supposing this regulation could be made effectual, mark how it was contrived to run directly in the teeth of all that had ever been advanced, to give a colour of justice to the exportation of negroes from Africa. The House had often been told, that the unhappy victims who were torn from their country by our slave traders, were, in fact, saved from a worse fate at home; for that they were convicts, or prisoners of war, who, if not sold for slaves, would be put to death: the slave traders would scorn to take any but such as were thus to be rescued from death by slavery—they, in fact, acted from motives of kindness to those whom they purchased; it would be barbarous to shut up the only issue which was left for those who were condemned to torture and destruction, to escape. All this has been gravely argued.

But mark how the assembly of Jamaica has put it down. They will take nothing above twenty-five years old. How is this? Have they found some secret by which they can prevent any African from being guilty of a crime, any African from being made a prisoner of war, after he was five and twenty? Or did they mean to consign all those who were above that age, and were yet, in spite of this salutary regulation which precluded them from all escape from their country, so headstrong as to become convicts and captives, to consign them unpityingly to their fate? The women, too,—they were not to be more than twenty-five. Their crime the House had often been told (as they could not be prisoners of war), was witchcraft. What secret had the assembly of Jamaica found, by which the practice of that dark act (which I am far from meaning to defend) could be confined within the limits of five and twenty? Or were they determined to rescue none but the young witches, and to leave the old ones to their fate? I am ashamed to appear to treat with levity a subject at which I cannot look without horror and disgust. But when the most absurd and unreasonable pretences are set up in defence of the most abominable practices, it is impossible not to feel the attempt to impose on one's understanding, as an aggravation of the outrage to one's feelings. And when I recollect how often, and how boldly, these arguments of the

justice of the trade have, in former sessions, been forced upon the House, I cannot repress the triumph which I feel in seeing them thus laid prostrate and trampled under foot, by those very proceedings upon which the cause of the Slave Trade is now exclusively rested.

Such, then, Sir, are the regulations which were to supersede the necessity of any interference on the part of the Parliament of Great Britain, for an object which the Parliament thinks indispensable, which the assembly by whom these regulations are made, neither has nor pretends to have in view, and which these regulations are obviously not calculated in the smallest degree to promote. If, however, the interference of the British Parliament were necessary, the House were told it must be ineffectual. The Slave Trade would go on, do what they could to put a stop to it. What?—Is a trade carried on by British subjects, with British capitals, in British bottoms, from British ports—not subject to British restrictions and regulations, not to be controlled, or abolished by British Acts of Parliament? But the trade, if not carried on by British traders, would fall into the hands of foreign nations. Foreign nations, it was well known, had almost entirely abandoned the trade; and, in fact, Great Britain alone monopolized the gain and the guilt of the traffic in human creatures. Where is the law, or what is the power that can prevent her from washing out so foul a

stain upon her commercial character? But the islands, if not supplied by Great Britain, would smuggle for themselves. Have they fleets then? Have they a commercial and a military navy? Would to God they had—for I am persuaded that never could any country attain to the degree of prosperity which such an establishment would argue, without having long, long before it reached that height, disused and abjured the practice of importing annual cargoes of misery and discontent; of outnumbering the civilized population of the country by crowds of savage and injured spirits, watching only the opportunity of rebellion and revenge. Away, then, with all apprehension of the incompetency of the British Parliament to rescue the British name from the disgrace of the slave trade. Can the assembly of Jamaica prohibit the delivery of the cargo at the ports of Jamaica? And can *not* the Parliament of Great Britain forbid its freight in the ships of Great Britain?

That in all the steps to be taken for the termination of the trade, the co-operation of the colonial assemblies is highly desirable, I frankly avow: and I would even gladly purchase it at the price of some concession. I will state fairly what I should have considered as a serious manifestation on the part of the colonial assemblies, of a desire to do something substantial towards bringing on the termination of the trade. If I had found in the papers upon the table, instead of a

professed resolution to resist the termination of the trade; if I had found a law, prohibiting the cultivation of any new land in the island, beyond what was already cultivated, and another law, expressly limiting the amount of the annual importation of negroes to the amount of the annual decrease in their population—I should then have owned that I believed the colonial legislatures to be in earnest. And though I cannot bring myself to say, that so often as the question was put to me, whether or no I would with my own good will allow another slave-ship to sail to the coast of Africa; whether I would allow another cargo, another individual human being to be dragged from that country? though I cannot say that, to that question so put to me, I could ever answer otherwise than by a flat negative; yet I own, that had I seen the two regulations which I have mentioned solemnly enacted, and begun to be fairly acted upon by the colonial legislatures, I should very much have wished that question to be suspended, until the efficacy of those two measures towards rendering the continuance of the trade unnecessary, had been allowed a trial.

I wish not to be misunderstood on these points. By allowing no new land to be brought into cultivation by slaves, I do not mean to tie down the planter to the actual spot which he is now working, or to prevent his removing from one estate, which might become effete and worn out, to

another, with the same gang of negroes. What I mean to restrict is, the taking an additional quantity of land into cultivation, and thereby creating a new necessity for an increased importation of slaves. With regard to the annual decrease in the population, I have heard it said formerly, that it was impossible to ascertain it. But the papers upon the table gave a direct contradiction to that, as they did to most of the other old arguments in favour of the Slave Trade: for among other regulations, I see one for this specific purpose, of obtaining a correct account of the annual increase or decrease of slave population upon each estate. A tax is paid, too, for each slave. What could be ascertained for one purpose, was equally to be ascertained for another. Another point is, the compensation to the owners of uncultivated lands, for the advantage which they gave up in restricting themselves from additional cultivation. This compensation, I have no hesitation to say, ought to be liberally adjusted, and cheerfully given. By these two regulations, sincerely adopted, I have little doubt that more would be done than by any other mode that the colonial legislatures could adopt towards making the trade unnecessary: but till these are adopted, all pretence of putting an end to the trade, is an attempt to impose upon the understanding of the House. Every additional acre that is brought into cultivation is not the continuance of the existing Slave Trade,

but the opening of a new one. Every negro that is imported beyond the population necessary for keeping up the present rate of cultivation, is the victim of a trade begun now, under all the aggravation of a pretended conviction of its injustice, and a pretended desire to put an end to it. The discovery of a new island, and the ravage of a hitherto untouched coast, would not be more completely and substantially the beginning of a fresh trade in slaves, the source and fountain of new horrors, and outrages, and calamities. Let no man who is not ready to subscribe heartily to these two regulations, expect to gain a moment's credit, by his profession, that he wished for the termination of the Slave Trade, or by his assertion, that if it were now a question, whether the Slave Trade should be, for the first time, established, he would be the man to oppose it.

I now come to the arguments of some gentlemen who have been chiefly instrumental in introducing into the debate that degree of novelty and variety, which has eminently distinguished this debate from any other that I remember upon the same subject. Not contented with insisting, in the first place, that the declaration of the assembly of Jamaica, that they had no view to the termination of the Slave Trade, was to be accepted as a proof that they had the termination of the Slave Trade constantly in their view and near their heart; not contented with contending, that in

limiting the age of imported negroes, and adding to the salaries of the clergy of the island, the assembly of Jamaica had done all that human wit could devise, and all that human legislation could enact, towards the accomplishing the purposes of the friends of the abolition: the gentlemen who had contended against the motion had added to these ingenious arguments another, and a broader and still bolder one, which, if it be true, leaves very little room to question, and very little reason to care, whether either of the other statements be true or false; namely, that for the sake of Africa the Slave Trade ought to be continued. And to illustrate and adorn this topic, honourable gentlemen have availed themselves of all those common places of humanity and philanthropy; all those appeals to the feelings of the House, which have been usually supposed to belong to those who contended on the other side of the question, and upon which they (the friends of the abolition) had, by these pathetic reasoners themselves, in this very debate, been accused of relying exclusively. I appeal to the House, whether I have not been right in ascribing the character of novelty to a debate in which all the topics of fine feelings are found forcibly enlisted on the side of the Slave Trade. One honourable gentleman (Mr. Petrie) has informed the House, that as a planter, he was most anxious for the abolition of the trade, but as a cosmopolite, as a friend of human nature,

and of the world at large, he must oppose it. "If you would confer a boon on the West Indies," said the honourable gentleman, "abolish the trade; but the West Indians are not so selfish as to desire even so beneficial a boon at the expense of their fellow-creatures in Africa; and the heart shudders to conceive what must be the state of Africa without the Slave Trade." Really, if any stranger had come into the House during that part of the debate, he must have conceived that the West Indians had been petitioning to be relieved from the burthen of importing annually vast numbers of dangerous, rebellious, unprincipled barbarians: and that the honourable gentleman, as agent for Africa, was stating to the House, in terms of the utmost pathos, the cruelty of depriving that country of so advantageous an export for its superfluous population. The British Parliament must not be so hard-hearted. It must continue the traffic in human beings, the commerce of flesh and blood, out of mere humanity. It was not indeed the first time that the inhabitants of Africa had been the victims of such humanity. The first importation of them into the West Indies was traced to a good Spanish bishop, who obtained the title of Friend of the Indians, by proposing to import negroes to relieve the native inhabitants of America from the toil with which their new inmates overwhelmed them. But the honourable gentleman went beyond the Spanish bishop in humanity; the bishop

began the Slave Trade for the advantage of the native inhabitants of the West Indies; the honourable gentleman would continue it for the benefit of Africa, even though the present inhabitants of the West Indies were, as he said, averse to its continuance.

"Next to the honourable gentleman, in kind consideration for the unhappy natives of Africa, came an honourable baronet (Sir W. Young), and an honourable gentleman (Mr. Dent), whom I class together, because their two arguments, though in some degree contradictory to each other, made (when taken together) a complete defence of the Slave Trade system in all its parts. The honourable baronet took upon himself the defence of the system of treatment in the islands; the honourable gentleman, as connected with a slave-trading town, had to prove the propriety of the exportation from Africa. And this was the way in which they went about it. "Slavery, according to the honourable baronet, was taken in a vulgar sense by those who talked in so lamentable a strain upon the subject—the nature of slavery was not correctly understood—there was nothing in reality so afflicting or depressing in it. A state of slavery had produced great men among the ancients. If gentlemen would look into their Macrobius, they would find that half the ancient philosophers had been slaves." Such was the honourable baronet's statement. "I own that I am not so much sur-

prised at it, as some gentlemen appeared to be. When I saw the word "right" applied in the manner in which it was applied in the Jamaica address in describing a system of oppression, cruelty, and rapine, I guessed that its companion, "philosophy," would not be far away. Right and Philosophy, are the two surnames of tyranny and injustice, in the vocabulary of French freedom; and the transition from that system of freedom to the system of absolute and abject slavery, is no violent or unnatural transition.

But while the honourable baronet was crying up the philosophy of slavery on the one hand, how did it happen that the honourable gentleman (Mr. Dent) could reconcile his feelings to such a mode of reasoning? The honourable gentleman had found great fault with my honourable friend (Mr. Wilberforce), for having mentioned in his opening speech that there were parts to be found in the interior of Africa where civilization had made such a progress, that books were not uncommon among the inhabitants. "Books!" exclaimed the honourable gentleman, "books! the blackamoors have books! and this the honourable mover gives as a reason for not exporting them as slaves! I think if the honourable gentleman had recollected all the mischief that books have done, especially of late years, in the world, he might have spared this argument at least. What produced the French revolution? Books! The

House will not be induced to put a stop to the Slave Trade, in order that the inhabitants of Africa might stay at home to be corrupted by reading books." Now, I must complain of a little unfairness in the arguments of the honourable baronet and the honourable gentleman, thus contrasted with each other. "Export the natives of Africa," said the honourable gentleman, "lest they become literati at home." "Bring them away," said the honourable baronet, "that they may become philosophers in the West Indies." I much doubt whether the remedy or the disease be the worst for the patient; but undoubtedly it does seem a little hard that no means could be found to prevent the dangers of African literature, except in the practical philosophy of the West Indies. The honourable baronet took fire at an expression in the speech of my honourable friend, who averred that the regulations for the better treatment of slaves in the islands belonging to Great Britain did not, even in their present improved state, equal the *Code Noire* of the old French government. The honourable baronet felt the utmost indignation that the laws, by which the colonies of a free country were regulated, should be compared with any body of legislation emanating from an absolute monarchy. I might refer to the papers upon the table, to prove, that be the *Code Noire* of France as bad as the honourable baronet was desirous it should be thought, the laws in the

English West Indies had, at least, been found as susceptible of amendment; I might refer the honourable baronet to the maimings, and mutilations, the scourges, and spiked collars, the use of which was prohibited, or regulated by the papers upon the table. But as I really wish to avoid any invidious or harsh topics, I will confine myself to more general observations upon the honourable baronet's way of treating this part of the subject, and I will ask him, whether, in point of fact, he had never found, in the whole extent of his various reading in ancient and modern history, that the colonies of a free country were in general worse regulated and worse administered, than those of more absolute governments? That this might be an extraordinary truth, a painful truth, and one which well deserved the examination of the philosopher and the politician, to discover its causes, and remedy the effect, I am not disposed to deny. But that it was a truth, all history showed. If, therefore, my honourable friend had ventured this assertion, without such strong proof to support it, in the particular instances, as even the papers upon the table would afford, he would have asserted nothing that could call for the sort of indignant reprehension which the honourable baronet had bestowed upon him; nothing that reflected personally on the gentlemen of the West Indies, nothing that reflected upon the character of this country; but a plain uncon-

tradicted fact, true in general, true in the particular instance, and for which the proceedings now laid before the House furnished ample and indisputable vouchers.

But the honourable baronet's argument proceeded on still broader grounds. "Tell not me," said he, "of the superiority of the French *Code Noire*, a code framed by a despotic government. It cannot be; it is not in the nature of things that it should be superior, or equal to the laws enacted by the government of a free country. However specious in appearance, there must be some radical defect in the laws enacted by despotism which prevents their beneficial influence." Is this so? Is the honourable baronet then prepared and contented to argue, that there is something in the nature of the relation between the despot and his slave, which must vitiate and render nugatory and null whatever laws the former might make for the benefit of the latter? which, however speciously these laws might be framed, however well adapted they might appear to the evils which they were intended to alleviate, must infallibly be marred and defeated in the execution? Is this the honourable baronet's argument? I thank him for it. I admit the truth of it, up to any extent that the honourable baronet pleases. And let the House, let the honourable baronet himself, mark how it bore upon the question before them. The question is, whether in what is

to be done towards alleviating and finally extinguishing the horrors of the Slave Trade, the proper agent was the British House of Commons, or the colonial assemblies? The honourable baronet contends, that the colonial assemblies, and not the British House of Commons, are the agents most proper to be employed. But what was the honourable baronet's argument? "Trust not the masters of slaves in what concerns legislation for slavery! However specious their laws may appear, depend upon it, they must be ineffectual in their application. It is in the nature of things that they should be so." Granted. Let then the British House of Commons do their part themselves! Let them not delegate the trust of doing it to those who, according to the honourable baronet's testimony, cannot execute that trust fairly. Let the evils of the Slave Trade be remedied by an assembly of freemen, by the government of a free people, and not by those whom the honourable baronet represents as utterly unqualified for the undertaking, not by the masters of slaves! Their laws, the honourable baronet has avowed, can never reach, will never cure, the evil. So that, according to the honourable baronet's argument, if there had even been no doubt upon the face of the papers upon the table, of the sincere intention of the colonial assemblies to carry the wishes of this country into effect: if there had been no doubt that the termination of the trade was the

object to which the regulations (such as they may be) were intended: if there had been no doubt that these regulations were, in fact, calculated for the purpose; if the assembly of Jamaica had professed as distinctly its anxiety to terminate the trade, as in point of fact it has expressed its resolution to continue it; still, according to the honourable baronet's argument, no trust could be reposed in these appearances and professions. There was something in the nature of absolute authority, in the relation between master and slave, which made despotism, in all cases, and under all circumstances, an incompetent and unsure executor even of its own provisions in favour of the objects of its power.

But then comes the general argument; that it is the interest of the proprietor that his slaves should be well treated, that they should not be over-worked, that they should produce a natural population; and that any reasonable man would see a sufficient security in these circumstances against cruelty and oppression in the islands. In the first place, this argument proved too much. For as the interest of the planter in the preservation and propagation of his slaves had at all times been the same, it would go to establish that the slaves had at all times been treated as well as possible, with a view to their preservation, to the propagation of their race, and to the consequent discontinuance of importation: suppositions which manifestly were not well founded;

else where would have been the necessity, and what would be the benefit of the laws now upon the table of the House, upon the benevolent intention and efficacy of which so much stress was laid? But, in the second place, the argument is perfectly fallacious. It is particularly unpleasant to go at large into this part of the subject, both because it is in its nature liable to be construed as invidious, and because it is not the part of the subject to which the motion of my honourable friend applies; but when points are stated so boldly, as containing incontrovertible truths, as setting all doubts at rest, and making all remedy useless and absurd, it is a little necessary to examine into them.

I am not here contesting the fact, that slaves upon our islands are well treated. I am combating the assertion, that from the interest of the proprietors they must of necessity be so. First, then, that man's strongest permanent interests are liable to be overborne by his passions, need hardly be argued at length. Let gentlemen look at the laws upon the table, and see what sort of evils they are intended to remedy. Next, the interest of the proprietor, resident in the island unencumbered with debt, and looking to his estate as a permanent and improving provision for his family, is one thing: but that of the absentee proprietor, who wishes to lay the foundation of a fortune elsewhere—that of

the embarrassed proprietor, who wishes to discharge incumbrances—and, lastly, that of the overseer, who is anxious to realize a sum of money as quickly as possible to purchase an estate for himself; all these might, in the nature of things, be interests of a very different kind, indeed, from that steady and permanent interest, which, contenting itself with moderate returns, would ensure mild and considerate treatment to the labourers, whose work was to produce them. All these might require increased labour and rapid produce; all these might, in the nature of things, be less solicitous about the eventual exhaustion of the soil, or of the workers of the soil, than about the extent of present profit. And when the proportion of these classes to that of the resident and unembarrassed proprietors is considered, what becomes of the general statement that the interest of the owner must in all cases secure the good treatment of the slaves? That the slaves are in general well treated I am far from being disposed to deny: I hope and believe they are so. But that they must be so, from any necessitating and unalterable cause, I cannot agree. This, however, after all, is not the question before the House. However well slaves might be treated, I do not believe there are many persons who are disposed to contend that the importation from Africa ought to be continued, merely to furnish objects for colonial benevolence. And I see

nothing, therefore, in the meliorated treatment of the slaves in the West Indies, that called for the continuance, though much that diminished the necessity of the Slave Trade.

There remains only one argument, drawn from the circumstances of the awful times in which we live—an argument of great weight and wisdom in general, but not bearing very happily upon the question in debate. The House is gravely cautioned to beware how, in these times of turbulent innovation, when the old establishments of the world were shaken to their foundations, and many of them tumbling in hideous ruin about our ears; to beware how they laid their unhallowed hands on the ancient institution of the Slave Trade! Seduced by plausible theories, and seeking after fancied perfection, would they rashly subvert a fabric reared by our ancestors, and consecrated by the lapse of ages? I have already had occasion to say something of the antiquity of the Slave Trade, in apology for the want of novelty and of variety in the arguments which I might have to bring against it. Those arguments I have admitted could not but be old; I have admitted they must necessarily be always the same; because they were founded in what was eternal truth; because they were allied to what was immutable justice; and they partook of the immortality of the one and of the unchangeableness of the other. But little, indeed, did I expect to hear

the remote origin and long duration of the Slave Trade brought forward with triumph; to hear the advocates of the Slave Trade put in their claim for the venerableness of age, and the sacredness of prescription. What are the principles upon which we allow a certain claim to our respect, to belong to any institution which has subsisted from remote time? What is the reason, why, when any such institutions, had, by the change of circumstances or of manners, become useless, we still tolerated them, nay cherished them with something of affectionate regard, and even when they became burthensome did not remove them without regret? What? but because in such institutions, for the most part, we saw the shadow of departed worth or usefulness, the monument and memorial of what had, in its origin, or during its vigour, been of service or of credit to mankind? Was this the case with the Slave Trade? Was the Slave Trade originally begun upon some principle of public justice or national honour, which the lapse of time, which the mutations of the world have alone impaired and done away? Has it to plead former merits, services, and glories, in behalf of its present foulness and disgrace? Was its infancy lovely, or its manhood useful, though in its age it is become thus loathsome and perverse? No. Its infant lips were stained with blood. Its whole existence has been a series of rapacity, cruelty, and murder. It rests with the House to decide,

whether it will allow to such a life the honours of old age, or endeavour to extend its duration. What are the grounds on which the plea of prescription usually rests? And in what cases is it where any existing order of things, though violent and unjust in its original institution, had by lapse of time been so meliorated and softened down, and reconciled to the feelings of mankind; had so accommodated itself to the manners and prejudices, and interwoven itself with the habits of a country, that the remembrance of its original usurpation was lost in the experience of present harmlessness or utility. Conquest was often of this nature. Violent and unjustifiable in its first introduction, it often happened, that the conquerors, and the conquered, became blended into one people, and that a system of common interest arose out of the conciliated differences of parties originally hostile. But was this the case with the Slave Trade? Was it in its outset only that it had any thing of violence, of injustice, or of oppression? Are the wounds which Africa felt in the first conflict healed and skinned over? Or are they fresh and green as at the moment when the first slave ship began its ravages upon the coast? Are the oppressors and oppressed so reconciled to each other, that no trace of enmity remained? Or is it in reason, or in common sense, to claim a prescriptive right, not to the fruits of an ancient

and forgotten crime, committed long ago, and traceable only in its consequences—but to a series of new violences, to a chain of fresh enormities, to cruelties not continued, but repeated, and of which every individual instance inflicted a fresh calamity, and constituted a fresh, a separate, and substantive crime? Certainly not;—and I cannot conceive, that in refusing to sanction the continuance of such a system, the House will feel itself, as in the smallest degree impairing the respect due to the establishments of antiquity, or shaking the foundations of the British constitution.

Mr. Windham, after complimenting Mr. Canning on the happy use he had made of his wit, observed, that those who were fond of abstract rights, were apt to make very considerable mistakes. They generally determined, when they found out an evil, to stop the cause of it immediately. They often recommended the immediate adoption of the reverse of that which was the cause of the evil. But such sudden and violent remedies often created a greater evil than that which they intended to remove. It was not difficult to show the absurdity of this system, of reversing the cause of an evil by way of remedy to it: thus, for instance, if a man were thrown out of a high window, and had a fractured bone, or a dislocated joint, it would be but an indifferent mode of cure to throw him up again. In this light did the immediate abolition of the Slave Trade appear

to him. The real question appeared to him one of moral and political prudence. The evil of the trade could not be stopped on a sudden. He thought that the wiser course for the House to adopt, was to refer the amelioration of the unhappy slaves to the colonial assemblies.

MR. PITT said he was one of those who always had been, and, until his mind should change its nature, always should be, a friend to the immediate and unqualified abolition of the Slave Trade. The injustice and inhumanity of this trade had been denied by no person, but had been admitted by all. He concluded that this country had the means within itself of abolishing this trade, and that it was their duty to do so. His right honourable friend (Mr. Windham) had said, that because a thing was wrong, we should not on that account adopt the contrary measure by way of remedy for the evil. Perfectly right: but that was not proposed to be done here; it was only proposed that we should discontinue an exposed, deprecated, convicted, recorded practice of injustice, rapine, and murder, not whether that should have ever been allowed, but whether it should ever be deliberately repeated. His right honourable friend had said, that if a man should happen to be thrown out of a window, by which he might have a bone fractured, or a joint dislocated, the remedy was not to throw him up again. It was not proposed to throw any of those wretches, who had their bones fractured and their joints dislocated, up again; it was only proposed that no more should be thrown out of the window. He wanted an end put to the practice —not to adopt the reverse of it.

After a few words from Colonel Wood, the House divided:—

TELLERS.

Ayes { Mr. Canning, Mr. Hobhouse. } 54

Noes { Mr. Sewell, Sir W. Young. } 84

So it passed in the negative.

ADDRESS RELATIVE TO THE UNION WITH IRELAND.

APRIL 22, 1799.

On this day the address of the Lords relative to a Union with Ireland was taken into consideration. The following is a copy of the address agreed to in the Lords on the 11th of April.

"We, your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Lords spiritual and temporal, in parliament assembled, humbly beg leave to assure your Majesty, that we have proceeded with the utmost attention to the consideration of the important objects recommended to us in your Majesty's Message, respecting the connection between this country and Ireland.

"We entertain a firm persuasion that a complete and entire Union between Great Britain and Ireland, founded on equal and liberal principles, on the similarity of laws, constitution, and government, and on a sense of mutual interests and affections, by promoting the security, wealth, and commerce of the respective kingdoms, and by allaying

the distractions which have unhappily prevailed in Ireland, must afford fresh means of opposing at all times an effectual resistance to the destructive projects of our foreign and domestic enemies, and must tend to confirm and augment the stability, power, and resources of the empire.

"Impressed with these considerations, we feel it our duty humbly to lay before your Majesty such propositions as appear to us best calculated to form the basis of such a settlement, leaving it to your Majesty's wisdom, at such time, and in such manner, as your Majesty, in your parental solicitude for the happiness of your people, shall judge fit to communicate these propositions to your parliament of Ireland, with whom we shall be at all times ready to concur in all such measures as may be found most conducive to the accomplishment of this great and salutary work. And we trust that, after full and mature consideration, such a settlement may be framed and established by the deliberative consent of the parliaments of both kingdoms, as may be conformable to the sentiments, wishes, and real interests of your Majesty's faithful subjects of Great Britain and Ireland, and may unite them inseparably in the full enjoyment of the blessings of our free and invaluable constitution, in the support of the honour and dignity of your Majesty's crown, and in the preservation and advancement of the welfare and prosperity of the whole British empire."

Mr. PITT moved, "that the House agree with the Lords in the said address to be presented to His Majesty."

Sir FRANCIS BURDETT thought the Right Honourable the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Pitt)

totally incapable of conciliating the people of Ireland; he was the most unfit man to attempt it, because he could not, without a dereliction of principle, remove the men who had made themselves so obnoxious in Ireland. He thought, therefore, that if the House and the country thought an Union as necessary to the happiness and security of the empire, they should look out for some other person to effect it; for the present minister had it not in his power. An Union might be desirable, if it could be accomplished by a conviction in the minds of the Irish people of its advantages—but he contemplated little benefit from an Union brought about by a mere hollow vote of a corrupt parliament, seconded by military power. The present time was not fitting for the entertainment of such a measure, nor the present minister qualified to bring it to a happy conclusion. He should, therefore, give his opposition to the motion.

Mr. Buxton animadverted upon the unprovoked manner in which the honourable baronet arraigned the conduct of the administration. He trusted the honourable baronet was the only man in the country who would advance such a charge against the Right Honourable the Chancellor of the Exchequer, as that the calamities of Ireland were imputable to him. As to the measure of an Union, it was his firm opinion, that unless it was adopted, Ireland must become a province of France.

General Fitzpatrick* said, that the precise question

* General Fitzpatrick was Secretary for Ireland during the Duke of Portland's administration.

now was, whether the House was to agree to this stage of the proceeding, which was, to lay the result of their deliberations at the foot of the throne. As it was professed that no step was to be taken in the matter till the Irish parliament showed a disposition to acquiesce in it, he thought it was unnecessary to do so. The grounds of the measure were already before the public, and so far that object was attained. Besides it might be attended with fatal divisions between the two countries, to make an appeal, as the address would do, to the crown upon the actual difference between the two legislatures. It was a delicate thing to call upon the King to decide in such a situation. With respect to the chief bond between the two countries at present, he thought erroneous opinions were entertained. It was not the crown merely, but the power of stopping Irish acts of parliament in this country which constituted the great bond. This he and many others had thought sufficient in 1782, when it was established, and that arrangement he still thought sufficient. He now begged leave to say a few words on the point, concerning which some difference had existed between him and the Right Honourable the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The papers which the right honourable gentleman had communicated to him on the subject had confirmed him in the statement he had made on a former occasion. It did appear indeed, from a secret and confidential letter of the Duke of Portland, that, during his residence in Ireland, he had entertained some vague idea of some farther arrangement for consolidating the connection between the

two countries. This, however, must have been soon abandoned, as five days after the date of that letter, the noble duke had authorized him to say in the Irish House of Commons that no farther measure was in agitation. That no farther arrangement was in contemplation, appeared evident in the subsequent conduct of the duke, and his speech to the Irish parliament on its prorogation, the words of which were as decisive as words could be to express that the arrangement was final; a speech, too, which was delivered after the right honourable gentleman himself had come into the British cabinet. With respect to himself, it was now clear that he could never have seen the letter of the Duke of Portland, to which the right honourable gentleman had alluded, when the first conversation on the subject took place; and he was convinced that any floating idea of a future arrangement, which the duke might have entertained, must have very speedily been given up when found to be impracticable. The settlement of 1782 was considered as final; and when it was asked, whether it was considered final by its authors? that could only refer to it in a finished state, not while in agitation or incomplete.

Mr. Canning.—Sir, I shall detain the House but a short time from hearing the explanation which it may probably expect from my right honourable friend (the Chancellor of the Exchequer), upon those points in dispute be-

tween him and the right honourable general, which have occupied the latter part of the right honourable general's speech. But there are other topics in the former part of that speech upon which I cannot refrain from making a few observations; and I have the less scruple in obtruding myself upon the attention of the House for the short time which those observations may take up, as the difference between the right honourable general and my right honourable friend seems to be now reduced almost to nothing. My right honourable friend never contended that the right honourable general was a party to those farther measures which had been in the contemplation of the administration of the day, after what was called the final adjustment of 1782; he only contended, that farther measures had, in fact, been in contemplation. The right honourable general admitted, that the papers which were submitted to his perusal proved that the Duke of Portland (the lord lieutenant under whom he served), and the English government had projected those further measures; but he asserted, at the same time, that he was not privy to their intentions. The truth of this assertion of the right honourable general no man can question, nor is it at all material. The right honourable general's admission that the Duke of Portland and others had entertained such intentions, was sufficient to

establish the point for which my right honourable friend contended: that, in their opinion, at least, the adjustment of 1782 was not final in the sense which was now attempted to be fixed upon that term.

But the part of the right honourable general's speech upon which I am more particularly desirous of animadverting, is that in which he has endeavoured to dissuade the House from completing their work, which they have now brought to a conclusion, by laying before His Majesty, in the form of an address, the result of their long, patient, and accurate investigation of one of the most important subjects that ever were submitted to the deliberation of a legislative assembly. This proceeding the right honourable general endeavoured to dissuade the House from adopting, on three grounds; first, on the ground of delicacy towards the sovereign himself; secondly, on that of delicacy towards the Irish parliament; and, thirdly, on the broad ground of the mischiefs likely to be produced by the measure of Union if carried into execution.

First, as to delicacy to be observed towards the crown,—I cannot forbear remarking, that it is at least a novel mode of showing respect, to refuse any answer whatever to a message of such solemnity and importance. His Majesty recommends to the consideration of the parliament of Great Britain and Ireland a mea-

sure which involved the dearest interests of the empire. He has required the advice of each parliament upon this measure, and undertakes, as the only channel of correspondence between the two, to communicate the decision of each to the other. And what is the conduct which the right honourable general prescribes to the parliament in England, in order to enable His Majesty's crown to perform the pledge thus solemnly taken ?—To preserve an obstinate silence, to return no answer, to offer no advice, to disregard altogether the appeal of their sovereign, and to force him into the necessity of avowing to his Irish parliament that he had nothing to communicate to them on the part of his parliament of England, that his parliament of England had treated his message with contempt!

The next reason for silence is the respect due to the parliament of Ireland, and to the decision (as it was termed) to which that parliament has already come upon the subject. How far any thing which has yet passed in Ireland can be considered as a decision against an Union, I will not argue now. I shall come to that point presently. It cannot be denied, however, that the Irish House of Commons has done precisely that which the right honourable general would now fain persuade the House of Commons of England to do—refused to address the crown upon the subject at all. And this conduct (it

was worthy of remark), when the right honourable general was endeavouring to persuade the British House of Commons to adopt it, he did not himself state as amounting to a rejection of the measure—when referring to it as what had been adopted by the parliament of Ireland, he stated it as equivalent to a complete rejection. There is surely some inconsistency in this. But, be that as it might, if the effect of this silence on the part of the Irish parliament be, that we in England are at this moment still disputing whether they have rejected the measure or no,—what ground is there to induce the parliament of England to pursue a similar line of conduct, except it be for the express purpose of making it as difficult for Ireland to understand what was meant here, as it was found impossible here to agree about the intentions of Ireland? If in all treaties and negociations it be necessary that one party should speak out first; it seemed reasonable, it certainly was most handsome and liberal, that the party superior in power and strength, and that which had a benefit to confer, should begin, rather than the weaker party, which was to receive the obligation. There appears, therefore, to be no disrespect to the parliament of Ireland in stating our opinion openly, although we were not in possession of theirs. Nor could I have thought that there would have been any thing disrespectful or injurious to Ireland in the

manner of opening the discussion of the subject, even if the fact had been, as the honourable general seems to suppose (but with a strange forgetfulness of the real state of the business), that the English parliament has been called upon to consider of the proposal of an Union, before the same question had been submitted to the parliament of Ireland. The fact, however, as all the world knows, is not so: the message was sent with a precision, perhaps, more scrupulous than necessary, on the same day to the parliaments of both countries; both proceeded on the same day to the discussion; and it certainly could not be represented as the effect of any extraordinary haste and precipitancy, of any determined hostility to investigation and fair discussion, that on the part of the British parliament it was first ready to lay at the foot of the throne the expression of its deliberate sentiments upon the measure recommended to its consideration.

Next, as to the mischiefs which the right honourable general predicted as likely to arise from pressing the Union upon the acceptance, or even upon the consideration, of the Irish parliament and the Irish people. The first evil, it seems, is that which has been so often stated, and so often answered, the danger of shaking the confidence and irritating the feelings of the Irish people, by trenching upon that sacred compact which they have been taught to consider as eter-

nally indissoluble and unalterable, the final adjustment of 1782. This is a subject upon which it can hardly be necessary to say much, after the admission of the right honourable general this night, as to what were the views entertained after the completion of that settlement by the very persons who had the greatest share in completing it:—it is a subject upon which, after the repeated discussions which it has undergone, it certainly is not easy to say any thing new. But surely it is not too much to assume, that the settlement of 1782, however perfect with respect to the objects to which it was applied, could not in an equal degree comprehend and adjust things which were wholly out of its scope and operation;—that if it was final, as concluding all the differences and discussions which it was intended to conclude, it could not be final to the extent of precluding all future discussion and settlement of points not then in contemplation, of points which might and did arise out of the nature of that very measure itself;—that if, in short, it was a measure of the most ample, and comprehensive, and wise, and salutary nature, as far as it went, and for the purposes for which it was devised, it was not, however, the very *acme* of all human legislation, the *ne plus ultra* of political provisions for all occasions past, present, and future, whether foreseen or unforeseen;—that if it had cured many and great then existing

grievances, it could not, however, remedy those which did not exist at the time when it was instituted, and much less those which had proceeded from its institution. There appears, therefore, in my mind, no impediment in the adjustment of 1782, why the state of the connection between Great Britain and Ireland as it now stands, why actually existing dissensions and distractions of Ireland, might not be a matter of fair consideration for the parliaments of the two countries; and why such measures as are likely to heal those distractions, and to strengthen and maintain that connection, might not be devised and adopted without scruple and without danger.

But then comes the argument of the absurdity of pressing a measure here, of which the voice of the parliament and people of Ireland have already loudly disapproved. In the first place, even supposing the disapprobation of the people of Ireland to be as general, and as rooted, as in partial instances it has undoubtedly been clamorous and violent; supposing even (which God forbid!) that this measure, no less essential to the peace of Ireland than to the security of the empire, should not ultimately be accepted by the parliament of that country—still, I would ask, what disadvantage, or what injury can arise from the parliament of Ireland being made to understand precisely what it was that they rejected, from their being called upon to decide, not upon the

name, but upon the thing?—what injustice will it be to Ireland, if we determine, but in truth, what a want of justice will it be to ourselves, if we do not determine—to record in a distinct and unquestionable shape, not only the offer which we have made, but the principles and terms on which we made it? Evident as it must be, that such an explanation is essential to the success of the measure, it is no less evident that in case of its failure, our best consolation, our best justification in the eyes of Ireland, and of the world; would be, to be found in such a record of the good intentions, of the liberality, and generosity of Great Britain.

But wherefore, after all, are we to despair of ultimate success? It is curious to observe, how strenuously it is recommended to us from the other side of the House, to abandon at once the pursuit of this object as utterly hopeless; and to compare this recommendation with the language held by the same gentlemen in former instances, when our object was at least as hopeless, and our perseverance, God knows, at least as pertinacious. What was the language held by those gentlemen, and what was the conduct which they recommended to be pursued by government in the negociations for peace? Did any of the humiliations and disappointments of those negociations, did the haughty rejection of our proposals at Basle and Paris, abate a jot of their

clamour for farther trial, or justify in their eyes the smallest relaxation on the part of ministers in their endeavours to procure a pacification? How loud and vehement were the charges of insincerity and duplicity against ministers, on any thing that could be construed into an appearance or suspicion of an intention on their part to acquiesce in the first or the second refusal of the enemy to treat? Did the cool contempt of Basle, did the kickings and buffetings of Paris, appear to those gentlemen to have sufficiently displayed the determined animosity of the enemy, or to have sufficiently proved the pacific disposition of this government? or did they not continually exhort to farther supplication? Did they not tell the government that they had not prayed earnestly enough, that they had not bowed low enough? "lower, lower, lower still," was their continued exhortation; "and in the end, the Directory must be overcome by your entreaties; proceed till you have left no form of prostration untried; else we shall still deny, and the Directory will have a right to distrust, the sincerity of all that you have hitherto offered."

If then, to extort a boon from an unwilling enemy, we were to proceed obstinately and steadily through every species of insult and indignity, were to brave all scorn, to take no denial, to press and urge our suit till we were absolutely spurned from the threshold on which we were kneeling;—why, in God's name, were we to be so easily

diverted from our endeavours to confer a benefit on a friend?—If in the one case we were taught to believe that by patience and perseverance we should, in the end, conquer the inflexible hostility of the Directory, and to console ourselves with the reflection that if we failed, we should yet have established beyond question the proof of our sincerity, and recorded to the world the justice and moderation of our views—why were we in the other case to despair of conciliating those whose interests and happiness we had at heart? why were we to hesitate about committing our dignity for such an object? and why were we to hold as nothing in this case, (even supposing a failure possible) the advantage of proving the sincerity and recording the justice of our intentions?

But this illustration might, perhaps, be pushed yet farther. What if, when the last negociations were set on foot at Lisle, the proposal of peace with England had been recommended by the French Directory for the consideration of the two councils at Paris—that in one of them, the council of ancients, perhaps, it had been approved by a great majority; in the other, the council of five hundred, it had been, after a passionate, tumultuous debate, hastily rejected;—and if in this state of things, ministers had come alone to the House, and declared that they found themselves under the necessity of breaking off the negociation, and recalling our ambassador, for that, in truth, there was no hope of peace;

is it not easy to imagine with what indignation such an intimation would have been received by the gentlemen who are now so easily daunted by the slightest appearance of opposition?—"What," (would they have said) "break off now? recall your ambassador now?—when your proposals have been actually approved by two branches of the legislature at Paris, and rejected only, without fair discussion, by the third? Will you not wait till that assembly shall have given the subject a more mature consideration? Can you believe that their refusal to entertain it is any thing else than a momentary passion, which will cool hereafter, and give place to sound deliberation? Have you not every encouragement you could expect at so early a period of the negociation, before the novelty of the proposal is worn off, and while the precise terms of it are yet unknown! The executive power recommending peace—one of the councils adopting the recommendation.—Depend upon it, there is no reason for despondency—persevere, and your success is certain. There may be some clamour to silence, some prejudice to soften, some unfavourable, but not perhaps unfair nor unaccountable, jealousy to remove; but the business will make its way; wait only the event of full discussion." I will not state the parallel at length, because I would not appear to make a comparison that might be construed as disrespectful to the parliament of

Ireland! but I cannot for my part, conceive on what principle that which would have been hailed as a presage of success in one case, should in the other be regarded as a certain omen of defeat.

Confident of the purity of the motives which dictated the proposal of the present measure; and convinced of its essential importance to the welfare, the salvation of Ireland; it is not a hasty word, an angry or suspicious refusal to consider the merits of the question, that would justify the parliament of this country in throwing up the plan, or abandoning the hopes of that success which a more mature consideration of the principles of the measure must ensure to it with the whole, and which it had already obtained with a part, of the legislature of the sister kingdom! Strong, however, as my conviction is of the advantages to be derived to Ireland from the Union, and of the absolute necessity of such a measure for securing the connection of that kingdom with Great Britain, I should be as averse as any man, from pressing it upon the Irish Parliament in any manner that should be injurious to its honour or independence. I will not now enter into a detail of the benefits to be expected from the Union, nor into a description of the dangers which threaten to impair or to dissolve the connection of the two countries, unless some efficient remedy were immediately applied to them. These points have already been fully dis-

cussed. I shall content myself with replying to a few of the arguments respecting the independence of the Irish parliament, which is supposed to be violated by the bare proposal of the Union, and which, in the right honourable general's apprehensions, will be absolutely done away by its accomplishment.

The attack upon the independence of the Irish parliament was stated to be the more unpardonable, as there was no settlement or security to be attained by an Union, which could not be equally well provided by an arrangement between the two subsisting and separate parliaments, without trenching upon the free will and independence of either. This argument I have not only heard in this House, but I have read it lately in publications purporting to be copies of speeches delivered from high authority elsewhere, and I have particularly seen it developed in a pamphlet against the Union (certainly one of the best written on the side of the question which it espoused) by Mr. Jebb, a gentleman, as I understand, of much talents and respectability! But with this argument I am so far from agreeing, that I could almost be satisfied to rest the whole question on this point singly; and to give up the plan of union altogether, if it does not appear plain that there can be no mode of arrangement devised for the several possible differences and disagreements between the two kingdoms, short of union, which will not take

away from the parliament of Ireland even the shadow of independence, and deprive it of all freedom and dignity in the points the most essential to its very being as a parliament.

What is the point, for instance, the most essential to the character of a House of Commons? what is the power and the function, without which it may indeed be a senate, it may be a grave and respectable council, it may be an assembly of representatives of the people, if you will, but it would cease to be a House of Commons according to the genuine spirit of the British constitution?—Is it not the power of the purse; the control preserved over the conduct of the executive ministers of the crown by the right of giving or withholding the supplies necessary for carrying on the business of the government? Let us see how the exercise of this characteristic and most important right would be secured to the Irish House of Commons, by a device which, it seems, is one of the main expedients proposed as a substitute for an Union, a settled scale of proportional contribution. I confess I should like to see the first meeting of an Irish House of Commons, after this ingenious security for its independence had been provided, and to hear the explanation which must be given by some great patriot who might pique himself upon having invented so saving a substitute, to any country member of parliament who might very reasonably be at a loss to comprehend its opera-

tion. Suppose a message from the throne communicating a declaration of war, and supplies to be voted in consequence. The country gentleman, conscious of his duty as a member of the House of Commons, and proud of the additional means of discharging it, which he might presume himself to have acquired by the defeat of the union, and the consequent vindication of Irish independence, would very naturally propose to consider of the causes of the war, in order to judge of the propriety of granting supplies. He would be stopped, however, by the patriotic member, who would tell him, "Sir, your independence does not allow this latitude. The parliament of Great Britain have already voted the supplies. We have nothing to do but to follow them."—"Good (would the country gentleman answer), let us proceed then to consider the *quantum* of the supplies which we are to raise."—"You may save yourself that trouble, Sir, (would be the reply of the great patriot). In the act of last year, intituled, 'An Act for Vindicating the Independence of the Irish Parliament,' you will find that we are bound by the vote of the British parliament, not only as to the general question of supplies, but as to the *quantum*. When England votes so much, Ireland is understood to have voted so much:—This was my substitute for the slavish dependence of an Union. This is what we mean by proportional contribution!"—The country gentleman would,

perhaps, be somewhat surprised at this explanation, and would inquire, rather anxiously, what function then it might be that he was come there to exercise. "What! (says the patriot) why, since the establishment of our independence, our business is to devise the means by which the money, already voted for us by the parliament of that country from whose domination we have so happily rescued ourselves, is to be raised."—Is this, then, the notable contrivance by which the dignity and effective power of the parliament of Ireland are to be maintained? And is it for a victory over union purchased at this price, that the Irish parliament would crown with laurel the brows of the champions of its independence? And yet, Sir, I defy any man to point out to me any other meaning than that which I have ascribed to the phrase "proportional contribution:" and I equally defy any man to show that there would be in the accomplishment of an Union any thing a thousandth part so degrading and destructive to the importance, and character, and constitution of the House of Commons.

Look, Sir, at other essential rights and powers of a parliament, and see how they can be made to belong to a separate and unconnected parliament in Ireland, or how they can be effectually exercised by it. The right of impeachment, can that be exercised by the parliament of Ireland against the king's ministers in Great Britain? And yet

does any body doubt that the king's British ministers are his proper and constitutional advisers in respect to the affairs of Ireland, as well as to those of the empire at large? The power of altering or limiting the succession of the crown—the crown of Ireland as well as Great Britain—who shall deny that power to the parliament of Great Britain? To ascribe the same power to the parliament of Ireland would be treason. Where, therefore, do there exist, or where can there exist, that perfect equality and independence, which it is imagined the Irish parliament must resign the moment that it ceases to be distinct from that of Great Britain?

But if this be all that the Irish parliament is to keep and maintain by keeping its separate state, let us next see what it will lose by incorporation with the parliament of Great Britain. Let us see which of its powers or privileges will be abridged, what salutary and important function it will be disabled from exercising, when it shall be received into the bosom of this parliament, and made part of the general superintending legislature of the empire. To watch over the local and immediate interests of a country, and to preserve its interests, peace, and tranquillity, is one great duty of a parliament: another is, to guard and improve the civil and political rights of the people, and the laws and institutions on which they rest. For which of these functions will the Irish parlia-

ment be disqualified, when united with that of Great Britain? Will it be less qualified to adjust and to controul the local feuds and animosities arising from religious differences in Ireland, when removed out of the reach of the immediate influence of every sudden and varying gust of popular frenzy? Instead of being committed as a party, it becomes an impartial judge of the conflict, when it is placed in a situation which enables it to weigh every claim with dispassionate calmness and dignity, to resist what may be extravagant without the appearance of enmity, and concede to the Catholics what may remain to be conceded without the appearance of intimidation, and without hazard to its own authority and power. If we consider the various other objects of legislation, in matters of commerce, of civil liberty and of political constitution, will the people of Ireland feel their interests less safe, their rights and privileges less guarded, when those whose duty it is to watch over them shall sit among the guardians of the British constitution, and when no law shall be passed affecting the condition of an Irishman, which does not include in its operation millions of his fellow-subjects in Great Britain?

There is yet another province of a parliament, in which it acts not directly from itself, but by advice and controul over the executive servants of the crown—the regulation of the concerns of a

country in its relations with foreign countries whether at peace or war. In this province what will the parliament of Ireland lose by its incorporation with the parliament of this kingdom? What will it lose? Is it not obvious that the question answers itself; that it can lose nothing; but that it will gain all?—Mark, then, the result of this examination of the powers and duties of a parliament. And if it be true that every attempt to secure the connection of the two countries against the possibilities of difference between two separate parliaments is either utterly nugatory, or must reduce to a mere mockery in one of them the very independence which it is intended to preserve; if it be true, that by the incorporation of the two parliaments, while the empire in general is augmented in resources, in strength, and solidity, the parliament of Ireland gains additional power in all its functions, and, in some cases, acquires functions altogether new: if this be so, and if the connection of the two countries be worth preserving, and if the dangers which threaten it be such, that an effort must be made for its preservation; can we hesitate to make that effort, while it is yet in our power? or shall we suffer ourselves to be driven from the only measure which promises to be adequate to the emergency, by the poor, unreasoning, unsupported paradox, that the separation of the legislatures alone can insure unity of will? Keep the parliaments distinct, and

their interests and inclinations must be invariably the same; identify them, and you immediately create separate interests and discordant inclinations.

Though I shall not detain the House by arguing what unfortunately is but too notorious to require argument or proof at this moment, the extent and nature of the calamities which have distracted and desolated Ireland, and which has rendered some great effort absolutely indispensable to save that kingdom to itself and to the empire—I cannot pass over wholly without notice the assertion of the honourable baronet,* that my right honourable friend† is to be considered as the sole and wilful author of all those calamities; that he alone has kindled the frightful and unnatural rebellion which has raged throughout that kingdom; that he alone has armed the frenzied populace against the government, against the laws, against civil order, and the rights of humanity; and all for the express purpose of getting Ireland more completely into his power: and that with this view he now brings forward the Union, the pretended cure for the evils which he has himself created. This charge is as extraordinary in itself as it is curious from the reasoning by which it is supported. As to the fact, to whom the rebellion is to be attributed, I shall have no great difficulty in setting the honourable baronet right: but the House, I can plainly see, anticipates me in

* Sir Francis Burdett. † Mr. Pitt.

all that I can say upon that subject. But let the House observe how the accusation stands against my right honourable friend;—and how the gentlemen on the opposite side of the House, in their laudable anxiety to heap upon my right honourable friend every crime, and to impute to him every ill motive of which human nature is capable, at length, so contradicted and perplexed their own arguments, that to prove him guilty of all that was ascribed to him, they must prove him to be wanting not in common humanity only and common honesty, but in common sense; a monster not of wickedness only, but of absurdity. Throughout the debates of last session, the kingdom of Ireland was described by those gentlemen as the theatre on which my right honourable friend acted all the bloody scenes, wherein his heart delighted; where he gave a loose to his tyrannical disposition, and revelled in iniquity without question or controul. In this country, it was said, there was something like a parliament to check him in his career—but there no eye watched, no hand restrained him—the parliament of that country was no otherwise efficient than to aid his excesses in the first instance, and afterwards to cover them from inquiry; it was at once the instrument and the screen of his oppressions. Well, but if all this was so—what becomes of the charge which has been made to-night?—If Ireland was already so completely his own, what need to foment a rebellion

to make it more so? If the Irish parliament was so entirely subservient to his wicked purposes, what need to get rid of it? Why should he throw away his instrument, and throw down the screen? If this were so, he must be the stupidest of tyrants, the most blundering of cut-throats, an assassin so poor in contrivance as to strip himself at once of his dagger and his cloak. I entreat the House to consider whether this was likely to be a true character of my right honourable friend; I do not mean to contend for his moral character: I admit him blood-thirsty and by nature cruel, if they please; but was he likely to mix so much folly with his malignity? Was he likely to be so ignorant, so perverse, so ill-managing, so absolutely directorial in his tyrannous usurpation, as this charge represented him to be?

But from probabilities the gentlemen on the other side of the House came to facts. My right honourable friend, it was said, created the rebellion in Ireland—for he recalled Lord Fitzwilliam, and the recall of Lord Fitzwilliam produced the rebellion according to them. Undoubtedly he did recall Lord Fitzwilliam. Fortunately the world was not now in ignorance as to the causes of that recall. Lord Fitzwilliam was sent to Ireland with instructions not to bring forward the Catholic question, nor to allow it to be brought forward at that time, if he could prevent it. The Catholic question was brought forward—and Lord Fitz-

william was recalled. Undoubtedly, too, there were those who, at the time of that transaction, predicted all sorts of evils to Ireland from the recall of Lord Fitzwilliam. Many evils have, in truth, happened since; but, nevertheless, I am not inclined to allow that the prediction was fulfilled. I am far from meaning any thing disrespectful either to the worthy and enlightened nobleman whose name was thus brought in question, or to his friends. But when other causes of such dreadful efficacy were manifestly operating in Ireland, precisely as they had operated in other parts of Europe, I cannot compliment so outrageously and so unseasonably, as to ascribe the distractions of that country to any thing personal to an individual, however highly I may respect him. I cannot read the confessions of those self-convicted traitors, who had, as it were, with their own hands, administered the poisoned chalice to their country; I cannot read their confession that French principles and French intrigue were the ingredients of that infectious draught, and yet continue to consider the recall of Lord Fitzwilliam as the only cause of the malady by which Ireland has been convulsed and almost destroyed.

With regard to the predictions which were referred to on this subject, they remind me of a prediction once very successfully employed by another great viceroy; a man with whom it would be no disparagement to the talents and political

sagacity of the respectable nobleman in question, to be compared—I mean Columbus. Columbus, as every body must remember to have read, when the people of Hispaniola, growing weary of their new guests, resolved to drive them away from their coast, and with that view refused to furnish them with any more provisions—Columbus addressed himself to the chiefs, and with an unusual solemnity of tone and deportment, informed them, that on a certain day the heavens should be overcast—the sun should hide his head; and then, in the darkness that would cover their land, they should acknowledge the anger of the offended deity, whose minister and messenger he was. It can hardly be necessary to inform the House, that Columbus was enabled, by the aid of his pocket almanack, to foretell an eclipse, of which the Indians, not being provided with any similar almanack, were wholly unapprized. And it can scarcely be necessary to add, that upon the eclipse taking place, as Columbus had foretold it, the Indians, convinced of his more than mortal power, hastened to make their peace with him, and to offer every atonement for their former impiety. Now, Sir, I conceive that it required not much more knowledge of moral than Columbus possessed of physical causes, to discover in the situation of Ireland, in the distribution of the different classes of society, in the state and temper of the lower orders of the people, materials, which, if a

spark from the dreadful conflagration of the French revolution should fall upon them, would presently burst into explosion: for the sagacity which enabled them to foresee and foretell this, I give those who did foretell it full credit. But as to the connection of this event with the recall of Lord Fitzwilliam, I confess I believe that Lord Fitzwilliam's recall was not more immediately the occasion of the rebellion, than the displeasure of Columbus was the cause of the eclipse.

But then, Sir, be the causes which have led to the present situation of things in Ireland what they may, there is another origin assigned by gentlemen on the opposite side of the House for this frantic measure of an Union. It originates, we are told, from the intoxication of power, the wildness and wantonness of uncontrolled authority in my right honourable friend; a power and authority which no minister before him ever possessed, and which, it seems, is an object of peculiar and watchful jealousy to such of those gentlemen as have not yet wholly abandoned their parliamentary duty. Sir, how far the power which my right honourable friend is supposed to possess may exceed that of former ministers, I shall not inquire; but that the degree of power possessed by a minister in this country, grounded as it must be on the confidence of parliament and of the people, growing only with that confidence, and ceasing with it, is in all cases to be considered as matter

of suspicion and of danger, I cannot allow. It is not for the degree of his power, but for the use which he may make of it, that a minister is arraignable before the bar of that public opinion which, in fact, confers, and which most effectually controls its exercise. But if a minister does find himself, from the enlarged confidence of the country, or from the peculiar conjuncture of the times, in possession of a greater sway and authority than has belonged to ordinary governments at ordinary times, such a minister is, indeed, bound to consider himself as placed in a most high and solemn trust; to consider what has been entrusted to him, not as a good to be enjoyed, but as a duty to be performed. He ought to take good heed, that if his power exceeds and abounds beyond what is necessary for carrying on the every-day business of the country, that excess and that abundance does not run to waste. For the use of the ordinary power which belongs to his situation, he is answerable to the sovereign who employs, to the parliament who trusts him, and to his contemporaries, whose interests are committed to his care; for the use of the surplus beyond what the ordinary administration of affairs requires, he owes, and if he be worthy of his character and high station, he will feel, a responsibility no less binding:—he owes it first to his own conscience, and then, not to his own age only, but to parliaments of future times, and to generations

of men yet unborn. If we look to the history of Ireland, Sir, perhaps we might find that no small part of the unsettled and comparatively unimproved state of the country might be traced to the want of some more steady and effective power in the governments which have succeeded each other in that kingdom: each of which, from the shortness of its duration, and from the necessity (consequent upon frequent change) of employing the whole of its influence and authority to secure support to its measures during its own temporary existence,—has been strong, indeed, for that purpose, strong for the ordinary administration of the affairs of the day, but wholly inadequate to the entertainment of larger views, to the founding of more comprehensive systems, for remote improvements, and for permanent advantage to the country. And this, Sir, I conceive to be one of the main evils which the Union is calculated to remedy.

If we look to the history of this country, what is it that most marks and distinguishes the last eighty years, the period which has elapsed since the happy establishment of the present family upon the throne, from almost any other period in the history of any nation of the world? It is, perhaps, that during a period the most flourishing and the most happy with which any nation ever was blessed, in which the civil and political rights of the subject have been better understood and more uninterruptedly enjoyed, in which the go-

vernment has been more powerful and respected abroad, foreign commerce more abundant, peaceful industry more effectually protected, and private wealth and comfort more generally diffused throughout the country, than at any the proudest period that the mightiest empires of the ancient or modern world can boast: there is yet less proof left to posterity of the wisdom or splendour of that period—there is less of public institution, of permanent establishment, which dates its origin within that period—there appears to have been less done for posterity during that period—than in many periods of the history of many nations, which can by no means vie with it in happiness or in glory. Is it because there has been a dearth of great talents, or eminent qualities, in the statesmen that flourished during those years? Certainly not. Some of the names which grace these annals might be enrolled with the greatest names of any age, or any country of the world. I would venture, therefore, to ascribe this particularity to the constant struggle for political power, to the conflict and balance of parties, which prevailed almost universally during the whole of that time. If any person were to dispute this theory, they would naturally quote the long administration of Sir Robert Walpole as an instance of pretty secure preponderance, and of power sufficiently established to have enabled him to attempt and carry into effect any plans of lasting utility. But

how stands the fact upon this subject? Twice only does that minister appear to have carried his views beyond his own time, and to have felt an ambition to establish institutions that should connect his name with advantages to be enjoyed by posterity: and in both these instances he was foiled.—I allude, Sir, to the sinking fund, which he had at one time been proud to consider as the lasting monument of his fame, but of which, with his own hands, he began to undermine the foundation: and to the well-known excise scheme, of the benefits of which he to the last declared himself firmly and immoveably convinced, but which was overborne by the popular clamour excited against it by his political antagonists. That he was sincere in his endeavours to carry the latter measure, and that he was most reluctantly forced to abandon it, cannot be doubted; and with regard to the sinking fund, though he was not driven to the violation of it by a parliamentary opposition, yet his defence of himself for so weak and impolitic a resource was grounded on his apprehension of the opposition which would have been directed against any other method of raising the supplies of the year. After his failure in these two instances, Sir Robert Walpole contented himself with applying whatever power he possessed to the carrying on, as smoothly as he could, the ordinary business of the country. I am not praising or blaming Sir Robert Walpole for his

conduct, either in these instances, or in general, I am merely stating the facts. And I would ask, what is the inference to be drawn from them? If it be excusable in a minister who has, or fancies himself to have, barely sufficient power to maintain himself in his station, to rest satisfied with doing the duty of the day, and leaving the country exactly where he found it, does it follow, that it is matter of accusation and criminal charge, or matter of sober and well-founded suspicion and jealousy against another minister, whom other times and other circumstances may have furnished with more extensive power, that his views for the good of his country expand in proportion to his capacity for serving it; that he looks beyond the routine of his official duty, beyond the momentary necessities of the day in which he lives; and that he lays the foundations of a fabric which may endure for ages, and which may afford to united nations a lasting shelter and security?

I beg pardon of the House, Sir, for having suffered myself to be led into a discussion of this nature, and for having detained them so much longer than when I rose I had any intention of trespassing upon their attention. I have but one word more to say. We are cautioned that no union but that of affection can be lasting or advantageous. Sir, I know it. And to argue whether or not the Union now proposed will be such an union, is to argue the whole question of

the probable advantages that will result from it. For do not let us be led to imagine, that the Irish, however spirited and quick in feeling are creatures of passion only; that they are not capable of appreciating real benefits, or of being convinced by a fair appeal to their understanding. Such an appeal it is the business of this address to secure. If the Union shall be found upon examination to offer solid and permanent advantages to that country, let us not be apprehensive that the proposal of it by Great Britain can long be construed into insult or unkindness. Fear not, Sir; if from this root shall spring and thrive the peace, the prosperity, the happiness of Ireland, the affections of the Irish people will grow and flourish with them: they will be engrafted on the same stock, and confirmed with the same strength:

"Crescent illæ, crescetis, amores!"

In the confidence that this will be the case, I discharge by my vote for the address this night what I feel to be a divided duty. As a member of the British parliament, I give my hearty concurrence to a measure which will consolidate and augment the strength and resources of the empire: but as connected with Ireland by many ties of blood and of affection, I contend still more anxiously for what I conceive to be involved in the issue of this question—the safety and future prosperity of Ireland.

Mr. Pitt supported the motion. In the course of his speech he read a variety of extracts from letters which passed between the Duke of Portland (Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in 1782), Lord Shelburne, and the Marquis of Rockingham, with a view of shewing that that which was called the final adjustment of 1782, was not considered by those by whom it was effected as a final adjustment between the two countries; but that, on the contrary, the ministers of that day were fully convinced of the necessity of adopting some further measures to strengthen the connection between Great Britain and Ireland.

The House then agreed to the Address, and the blank therein was filled up with the words "and Commons."

ON THE KING'S MESSAGE RESPECTING OVERTURES OF PEACE FROM THE CONSULAR GOVERNMENT OF FRANCE.

FEBRUARY 3d, 1800.

Mr. Secretary Dundas, on the order of the day being read for taking into consideration His Majesty's Message, and the papers relating thereto, moved that an humble address be presented to His Majesty, to return His Majesty the thanks of this House for his most gracious Message, and for having been graciously pleased to direct that there should be laid before this House copies of the communications recently received from the enemy, and the answers which have been returned thereto by His Majesty's

command; to assure His Majesty that we consider the conduct which His Majesty has held on this occasion to be such as was dictated by his regard to the most important interests of his dominions; and that while we join with His Majesty in looking eagerly to the period when it may become practicable to re-establish the general tranquillity of Europe on a sure and solid foundation, and at the same time provide effectually for the security and permanent prosperity of his people, we shall feel it, in the interval, our indispensable duty to continue to His Majesty, on behalf of those whom we represent, our firm and decided support in such measures as may best tend to confirm the signal advantages which have been obtained to the common cause in the course of the last campaign, and to conduct the great contest in which His Majesty is engaged to a safe and honourable conclusion;—and that, impressed with these sentiments, we shall not fail to make such provision, as under the present circumstances, may appear to be necessary for the several branches of the public service, and for the vigorous prosecution of the war.

Mr. Whitbread opposed the motion. The overtures to peace which had been made, were made in a manner agreeable to the rights of civilized nations, and in no way incompatible with that respect which was due from one crowned head to another. In saying "crowned head," he disclaimed every intention of softening by any terms, whatever crime attached to the First Consul of France, in his late assumption of power. His power, however attained, if once consolidated, must be respected as well as the most legiti-

mate. His letter to His Majesty was full of good sense, free both from republican familiarity and courtly adulation. Every topic that could revile, and every art that could blacken, had been unnecessarily and unfairly resorted to, for the purpose of political slander; and he was very sorry to see that the intercepted correspondence from Egypt, strengthened and embellished with notes, and, perhaps, too, garbled, had made its appearance, with a view to prejudice the country against the First Consul, and thereby to set at a distance every hope of a negociation for peace. The honourable gentleman, after denying that Buonaparte had in no instance ever observed a treaty or kept an armistice, proceeded to observe, that after the treachery of Prussia, who took a subsidy from us, and afterwards ran away from her engagements, and after the conduct of those who were formerly our allies, if ministers would treat with none but immaculate governments, they could never expect to have an ally or friend. But let it be supposed, that while we refused to negociate, our allies acted a contrary part, and seized the moment of pacific overtures from Buonaparte. What then would be the consequence? We should be left to negociate at some future time on grounds far less advantageous than the present. The veneration of the ancient royal family of France was carried by some gentlemen to an extravagant length, by an endeavour to palliate their crimes. If perfidious, their perfidy was said to be of a noble kind; if ambitious, their ambition was said to be of the most sublime nature. Had the conduct of Louis XIV. been forgotten in his seizure of Holland, and the perfidy of

the Bourbon family during the American war, by which a whole continent was separated from its mother state? The honourable gentleman insisted that we were now contending for either of these two things,—to reinstate a Bourbon on the throne; or to exterminate the rest of those persons in France who held jacobinical principles. If the former supposition was true, we were fighting, he thought, for an unattainable object, and the contest must be endless; if for the latter, we were fighting for an opinion; and both were equally absurd. He concluded by saying, that under our present circumstances we ought not to refuse the proposals of Buonaparte for a general pacification; and that it was the interest of this country that a peace should be concluded as speedily as possible.

Mr. Canning.—Sir, much as I differ from the honourable gentleman who has just sat down, in almost every argument which he has advanced, and in every inference which he has drawn, respecting the past conduct, or present views and situations of this country and of France; there are no points on which I differ from him more entirely, than on the position which he laid down at the beginning of his speech, that the origin and causes of the war formed no part of the present question: and that which he insisted upon in a subsequent part of his speech (and which, coupled with the foregoing, does indeed go to preclude all discussion upon the question to

any useful purpose), that it was highly unnecessary and improper to enter into any investigation of the personal character of the present first consul of the French republic.

Grant the honourable gentleman these two assumptions, and there is an end of our deliberations; there is no longer a subject before the House which it can be of the smallest advantage to examine; there is no longer any test by which the propriety or impropriety of the conduct of government can be tried. Take away the consideration of the aggressions of France in the commencement of the war, and her conduct during its continuance; and take away, at the same time, the liberty of inquiring freely into the grounds and justice of the pretensions put forward by the person now at the head of the French government; and what remains, by which to estimate the comparative policy of refusing, or of having accepted, the overtures for negociation? How is the House to judge of what would be the conduct of France under the present circumstances, but by a review of what has been her conduct hitherto? By what means are we to decide how far the power, and the personal dispositions, of the present chief ruler of France supersede the necessity of recurring to the examination of the conduct of France under its preceding revolutionary governments, unless we are permitted to inquire, in the best way that we can, into the probable sincerity of those dispositions, and the probable stability of the power for giving them effect?

It is singular, however, that while the honourable gentleman denies to the side of the House on which I sit the right of reviewing the past transactions of France with foreign nations, and with this country, and the advantage of contrasting the professions of the chief consul with his former principles and conduct; he has himself no scruple in taking that liberty with the character of his own country, which he thinks unwarrantable in respect to that of the enemy; and he has no delicacy in going back to the crimes and errors of monarchical France, and depicting the dangers which Europe in former times had to dread from the overweening ambition and tyrannical usurpations of Louis XIV; though any such animadversion upon republican France is, according to the honourable gentleman, in no way to be justified, the usurpation of Buonaparte being privileged to an exemption from censure or inquiry.

The conduct of Great Britain in the earlier part of the war, the honourable gentleman declares to have been so unprincipled, and her aggressions and insults against neutral and unoffending nations so gross and outrageous, that nothing of what was imputed to France could stand in competition with it, in point of enormity. No violation of the law of nations, no infringement of rights, no infliction of calamities, with which France was charged, could, in the eyes of

the honourable gentleman, equal the glaring injustice and oppression of our conduct towards Genoa and Tuscany.

The transactions respecting Genoa and Tuscany, have been made the ground of much unjust accusation, and appear to me to have been wholly misunderstood. The short statement of that which relates to Genoa is simply this: Genoa was considered, at the beginning of the war, as strictly neutral, and, as such, was respected by His Majesty's fleet in the Mediterranean, until it was found that, in spite of its pretended neutrality, the Genoese government allowed France to derive constant and large supplies of provisions for its armies, from their Genoese territory; and that the repeated friendly remonstrances of the commander of His Majesty's fleet, and of his minister at Genoa, had been employed in vain to prevent the repetition and continuance of a practice, which all the laws of civilized war gave them a full right to complain of as a departure from neutrality. When these admonitions had proved ineffectual, recourse was had, and justly, to threats; which threats, however, be it remembered, were never carried into execution; and, perhaps, the only thing with which His Majesty's government has to reproach itself, within the whole of this business, is, that it did not allow the system of intimidation to be pursued far enough to answer, for any length of time, its justifiable purpose; nor was there any

thing that could be represented as contrary to the laws and rights of nations in what was done, or what was threatened on this occasion; nor any thing that could be considered as even harsh and rigorous, except, indeed, by those who conceived that the French had a privilege, uniformly, and in every case, to exact to the full, not the observance of the duties of neutrality towards them, but the violation of them in their own favour: and that in proportion as France was exorbitant in her demands, we were to be humble and self-denying; that we were to take as an excuse, from every neutral state that might choose to conciliate France by favour and partiality, the assertion, that truly they could not help it; that France was so pressing, and so peremptory, that they were obliged to consult their own safety by concession: in short, that we were to submit to all the disadvantages of a strict and scrupulous forbearance on our part, while France enjoyed all the advantages of unqualified exaction; and that, in compassion to the weakness of the states who could not preserve their line of duty towards us, we were to omit every opportunity of doing justice to ourselves; a system of miserable imbecility, which I do not wonder France should be loud in preaching, in order to reserve to herself exclusively, the right of departing from it in every instance; but one which I trust this country will never adopt, so long as it has a just sense of its

own rights, and power to assert and to enforce them.

With regard to Tuscany, much the same observations apply. France has continued to derive every assistance, and England has felt every inconvenience in the conduct of the war, from the ill-observed neutrality, and partial policy of Tuscany: a partiality not more disadvantageous to the cause in which England is engaged, than it is manifestly prejudicial in its effects, to the security of the Grand Duke's government, and to the real interests of his dominions. Tuscany has been, from the beginning of the war, the centre of the French conspiracy against the peace and independence of all Italy; and even in the councils of the Grand Duke himself, it is justly apprehended that there had penetrated a degree of French influence, dangerous alike to his own states, and to all his neighbours. Under these circumstances Great Britain was not only justified, but was called upon to assert her own right to be treated with fairness and impartiality, and was warranted in employing the most peremptory terms to enforce the respect which was due to her, and in representing amicably, but forcibly, to the Tuscan government, the double danger in which it was daily involving itself, from the resentment of the allies on the one hand, and the overbearing domination of France on the other. Representations to this effect certainly

were made by Lord Hervey, then His Majesty's minister at Florence; and, if, in executing the orders of this court, Lord Hervey was hurried by his zeal for the service of his sovereign, into expressions of any thing like intemperance or disrespect, it ought not to be forgotten, that upon the statement of this circumstance, accompanied with the expression of the Grand Duke's displeasure, and desire that Lord Hervey should be recalled, that desire was instantly complied with, Lord Hervey was immediately recalled; and thus the best and most satisfactory reparation was made to the government of Tuscany, and the character of the government of England completely cleared. Nor is this, however, all: the conduct of Lord Hervey, though admitted to be such as to occasion this complaint of the court of Tuscany, and to draw down upon him, in consequence, this mark of disapprobation of his own court, was yet not entirely such as it is represented in certain publications, from which, in this, as in other instances, the honourable gentlemen on the other side of the House probably derive the information, on which they think it expedient to ground their charges against the powers at war with France. In the same collection of state papers, which contains the treaty of Pavia, and the secret articles of the treaty of Pilnitz, both gross and impudent fabrications, without the shadow of foundation, or the pretence

of authority; in that same publication, resting on similar grounds of authenticity, is even to be found a pretended note from Lord Hervey, addressed directly, and personally, to the Grand Duke of Tuscany, of which it is sufficient to say, that no such note was ever presented; no such note was ever transmitted from Lord Hervey to this court; nor was it ever heard of by any person connected with the government of this country, until it made its appearance in the same volume with the treaty of Pavia and Pilnitz.—[Mr. Canning here read a copy of a paper, purporting to be a note from Lord Hervey to the Grand Duke of Tuscany, dated September 2nd, 1793].—I read this note, Sir, not as conceiving that the circumstance of such a fabrication having been contrived, does away all ground of complaint against Lord Hervey. The complaint I have admitted to have existed; and it has been satisfied by Lord Hervey's recall. But I do think that this, coupled with the other instances to which I have referred, of the spurious treaties of Pavia and Pilnitz, may have the effect of making gentlemen a little cautious in future how they adopt and rely upon, as authentic state papers, whatever trash it may please the friends of France to publish as such, for the justification of her cause.

I have one word more to add upon the subject of Tuscany. The honourable gentleman appears to rely upon the conduct of Great Britain, in this

instance, not only as a set-off against the outrageous proceedings of France towards neutral nations, but as a ground of her proceedings towards Tuscany itself in subsequent periods of the war, particularly in the invasion of Leghorn, and the seizure of British property there in 1797. I have already, I trust, done away the impression of the honourable gentleman's argument, in the former respect, by showing that Great Britain has not conducted herself so flagrantly as is represented, and that, in the instance in which her minister outstepped the line of his instructions, she has, with the condescension becoming a great country in its intercourse with a weaker state, (whose very sense of its own weakness might, perhaps, make its feelings the more irritable, and its honour the more jealous), done every thing in her power to atone for the offence. In other respects France can derive no defence from the conduct of Great Britain; for, subsequently to all that passed on this occasion through the medium of Lord Hervey, and, consequently, to Tuscany's being considered by France as having become a party in the war against her, a separate treaty of peace was concluded at Paris between the Grand Duke, and the French republic. And it was in violation of this treaty, that the French army under General Buonaparte took possession of Leghorn, and seized and confiscated British property to an immense amount, deposited there under the pro-

tection and guarantee of Tuscan neutrality; a violation of the laws of neutrality almost unparalleled in extent and atrocity, except by other examples to be found in the conduct of the French themselves; and an outrage for which the government that permitted, or what is in strictness the same thing, could not prevent it, is responsible to the government whose subjects have suffered by it. This, therefore, gave to His Majesty, if he had chosen to make use of it, full right of reprisal, and gives to the moderation observed since in the conduct of Great Britain towards Tuscany, a character of the greatest magnanimity, generosity, and forbearance.

After all, however, if it were in other respects proper and reasonable to retrace the conduct of France at former periods of the war, and if the conduct of Great Britain, in regard to other nations, left them at liberty to do so, the honourable gentleman contends, that the ministers had given up all right to look back, by entering into a negociation at Paris, and afterwards at Lisle. And he farther insists, that the declarations published in His Majesty's name, at the conclusion of each of those negociations, bind the government of this country to enter into negociation anew, at least to receive overtures for peace, whenever the enemy might show a readiness to treat with them. This reasoning seems to me to be by no means correct. This pledge given by

the declarations of His Majesty can in no fair construction be made to apply so widely and so eternally as the honourable gentleman is desirous of having it believed. As to the declaration made after the Paris negociation, whatever might be the promises held forth in future negociation, they were fully and entirely satisfied, and the pledge contained in them entirely redeemed, by entering into the negociation at Lisle. And as to that which was published after the negociation at Lisle, it is not only not of the vague and unlimited nature, which the honourable gentleman described, but it is in truth more limited by circumstances, and more precise in the extent and duration of its obligation than the former. For what was the state of the circumstances under which that declaration was published? Lord Malmesbury had been empowered to offer the terms of peace at Lisle, so liberal, so advantageous to the enemy, that nothing, in fact, but the real and pressing necessity for peace which was felt in this country, could have justified the government in offering them; and that it was not unreasonably to be apprehended, that any favourable change in the circumstances of the country might induce the government to seize an opportunity of departing from them. Such, however, was not the intention or the policy of government. A favourable change had taken place in the circumstances of the country; for, soon after the breaking off of the

conferences at Lisle, and the sending away of Lord Malmesbury, it had pleased Providence to bless His Majesty's arms with a signal victory over the fleet of one of his enemies. The effect of this victory was, to secure, in a great measure, the safety of the country, and to raise the spirits of the people certainly in a very considerable degree. But still the King's ministers thought peace upon the whole desirable; and feeling this, and apprehending, at the same time, that the enemy would naturally conclude that the advantage so recently gained must of necessity have raised our terms, they thought it expedient to give them to understand that such was not the case—that even after the victory of Lord Duncan they were ready to make peace upon the same terms which they had offered before, and, for this purpose, the declaration was published. The enemy might have taken them at their word at the time; fortunately he did not. But was it to be argued, that such a declaration, made under such circumstances, and with such a view, was to be everlastingly binding? That because one victory, because a favourable change, in one particular, of the situation of this country, did not alter the opinion of ministers as to the preferableness of peace to war (a choice of evils, God knows, as such a peace must have been), and did not affect the moderation of their terms, therefore they were to be held for ever to the words, not the spirit, of their proposition; were

never to be at liberty to vary their tone with the variation of circumstances, both in this country, and in the situation of the enemy, but were bound to be always forthcoming, when the enemy pleased to call upon them, and to make at all times the worst terms possible for Great Britain, because there had been a period when a peace, even on terms so bad, was thought preferable to the continuance of the war? Surely there is not common fairness, or reason, in such a mode of argument; nor would there be common sense in such a mode of conduct!

The distrust of the new government of France, the honourable gentleman professes to believe to be in a great measure affected, and to be put forward only in order to afford an opportunity for declaring the marked and exclusive predilection of ministers for the ancient monarchy of France; and nothing can, in the honourable gentleman's opinion, be more impolitic, as well as more outrageously insulting to the feelings of the people of France, than the avowal of a desire to see the ancient monarchy restored. Undoubtedly such a desire was plainly and distinctly avowed; and, for my part, I am at a loss to conceive what there is in the avowal that can irritate the feelings of Frenchmen. If, indeed, it is possible to imagine, that there still exists in France a large body of sincere, bigotted, fanatical lovers of republicanism, of persons who gravely believed in

the purity and perfection of the republican principle, as applicable, or as ever having been applied to the government of France, under any of its successive revolutions; who still look with faith and hope to the preservation and propagation of their principles, and consider nothing but the return of monarchy as likely to oppose their progress, or diminish their influence and operation; if such a race of madmen yet are to be found, whose eyes and understandings, the whole series of tyrannies from Robespierre to Buonaparte have not been sufficient to open; with them, I must confess that the expression of a wish for the restoration of the old legitimate government may be unpopular; their feelings such a proposition may irritate:—But, I confess, I cannot easily persuade myself that such a race of men can be very numerous either in France or elsewhere. And if, as is more probable, the general and prevailing feeling throughout France, is that of weariness and disgust at the scenes of horror and calamity through which they have passed; if they now begin to see, with regret and compunction, that, after ten years of sufferings and of crimes, of miseries inflicted upon others, and heaped upon themselves; after wading through seas of blood in pursuit of the empty form of liberty which still eludes their grasp, the sole result of their endeavours to shake off the government, which they were once taught to think so

oppressive, has been no other than the subjecting themselves to a tyranny ten thousand times more galling; that they have succeeded only in exchanging the sceptre for the sword; that, instead of eradicating monarchy, they have stripped it of all that made it venerable, and of all that made it useful, of all that recommended it in theory, and all that softened it in practice; have stripped it of its stability, its legitimacy, and its limitations.

If such, Sir, be now the reflections of all thinking men in that unhappy country, what reason is there to apprehend that they would shrink from the mention of their ancient government? That they would withhold their homage from a known and mitigated monarchy, to pay it to a frightful and jealous usurpation? That they would hold sacred their allegiance to a shapeless mockery of royalty, with "the likeliness of a kingly crown" upon its head, and refuse it to that substantial and protective power, under which they have flourished for ages, in respect abroad and in happiness at home? Is it not rather to be presumed, that they now begin to look with anxious desire for a termination to their calamities, in such an order of things as alone can terminate them in peace and security? Is it not probable—is it not certain—does not every man who hears me, know from his own experience, that the first idea suggested by Buonaparte's successful usurpation, was, that it was a step to the restoration of

monarchy? Is it not obvious to every person, that from the government of one man, to that of a lawful king, is a transition neither so strange nor so difficult, as from any of the more complicated constitutions which have risen and fallen in France since the abolition of the monarchy? And, even now, though to point out the specific stages by which the change is to be brought about may be by no means easy, is there any human being who does not feel that monarchy is brought more within view than it has been at any period since the beginning of the revolution? That those who wish it feel more confident in their hopes; that those who dread its return yet think it more probable, and are more ready to compromise with it: and that, therefore, to put the case of the re-establishment of monarchy as that in which peace would become easy and certain, was to specify not only the most desirable but the most probable termination of the war, and that which, according to all human calculation, is most near at hand.

But an apprehension was expressed, that in stating the desire of this government for the restoration of monarchy in France, a pledge was given to the royalists that peace should never be made at all, until monarchy was restored. It was feared, that government were thus making common cause with the royalists, and implicating the fortunes of this country in the issue of a contest

in which substantially it has no real concern. Not so: the language of the official note was guarded carefully in this point; and so little did it justify the conclusion that common cause was made with the royalists to the extent described, that in other comments upon the note, which I have seen, a directly contrary effect was stated as likely to be produced by it; namely, that the intimation of other possible cases in which peace might be made by this country with France, would prevent the royalist party from building any hope at all upon the good wishes of Great Britain. The truth, however, lay between both; and it may perhaps, be sufficient to answer to both objections, that the royalists were not deceived as to what was the true intention of government, and that they were satisfied with it. The royalists of France, and the government of this country have undoubtedly a common object, but they have different degrees of interest in the attainment of it, and proportioned to those different degrees of interest may be the degrees of their respective exertions and perseverance in the pursuit. So far, however, as they were both to proceed, they might safely and beneficially proceed together. It was a partnership in which the royalists had necessarily embarked their whole fortune; this country, a part only; and the terms of the connection resulting from these combined, but unequal interests, were distinctly understood.

If we could bring the royalists through by the same efforts by which we were working for our own advantage, surely it was highly useful, and honourable, and humane, to do so; but we were not pledged to persevere beyond what we thought prudent on our own account; we might withdraw at any time, when our own objects were accomplished, or when we saw, or thought we saw, that they were unattainable, without greater risk than it appeared to us advisable to incur: and we might withdraw without reproach, and without dishonesty. We had no share in bringing the royalists into the contest, though finding them at our side, we were bound in honour and humanity to assist them, as far as our ways lay together: but while we owed thus much to them, we did not, nor did they, forget that we owed all to ourselves.

Next, however, according to the honourable gentleman's arguments, it is to be considered that this country has, in fact, no interest whatever in the re-establishment of monarchy in France: nay, that it is rather an event to be looked at with jealousy and apprehension. This assertion, though I have heard of its being made and maintained in other places, I can hardly believe to be made with seriousness. Good God! Has Great Britain,—has the world no interest in the re-establishment of order, of a known, defined, understood, experienced, legitimate order of things,

in the room of a system of disorder, anarchy, and impiety, not more afflicting to France, than it was incompatible, as has been proved, by long and painful experience, with the security of every other government upon earth? Is it nothing to this country, looking to peace as its object, whether she shall be able to conclude a peace on which she can rely, and under which she can repose with confidence; a peace which shall bring with it the renewal of safe communication, of commercial intercourse, of reciprocal trust and benefit; or, whether she shall only rest on her arms in hourly expectation of being again summoned to war, in defence of her dearest interests? And does the honourable gentleman suppose, that such a peace as is alone worth having, as alone can be maintained without all the cost, and more than all the dangers of war, can rest on any other grounds than the restoration of such an order of things in France as will ensure the return of credit and stability to the government, and of security for property and of honest industry, and commercial morality amongst the people?

The expression, therefore, of an anxious wish for the re-establishment of the French monarchy does not appear to me to be either so dangerous in the effect that it may produce in France, nor so extravagant with respect to the interests of Great Britain. But here the honourable gentleman has taken a very extraordinary ground indeed;

and in his zeal to combat the idea of restoring monarchy, he has far outstepped the rule of forbearance; with respect to the past conduct of France, which he prescribes for those who differ from him upon the question, and has gone into a laboured dissertation on the dangers with which monarchy, in the House of Bourbon, had in old times threatened this country and all Europe. The mind of that man must be singularly constituted, who, living in such times as the present, can overlook all the dangers actually impending, and all those which have recently overwhelmed the world from the profligate aggressions and tyranny of republican France; and who yet trembles with apprehension at the recollection of the ambitious projects of Louis XIV. The honourable gentleman refers to the projects of that monarch, which threatened the independence of Europe, a hundred years ago; and speaks of them in a tone which shows, that he thinks the independence of Europe matter of concern, and the overweening ambition of France, matter of dread to this country: and he also speaks in the manner which it deserves, of the stand made by King William in defence of the liberties of this country and of Europe. I agree with the honourable gentleman, in looking back with pride to that distinguished period of English history. I find in that period much to praise; wisdom and firmness in our councils, skill in our generals,

valour in our armies: but I find nothing that delights me more, or that I would rather recommend to the admiration of the honourable gentleman and his friends, than the cordial support afforded by the Commons of Great Britain to their sovereign, in the prosecution of a war, carried on for the true interests, the honour and safety of their country, against the rapacious, insolent, and domineering ambition of France. [Mr. Canning here read an address of the House of Commons to King William, in the year 1696, the eighth year of the war, containing expressions of their determination to support His Majesty to the utmost, "till he should be able to obtain by war, a safe and honourable peace.*"] This example is, indeed, worthy of being quoted, and worthy of all the praise bestowed upon the exertions of that reign, by the honourable gentleman. But, after all, what does the honourable gentleman gain to his argument, by referring to the days of Louis XIV., and by citing the precedent of the noble struggle maintained by this country, during the reign of King William, and his successor, against France? He reminds us, it is true, what were the efforts, and what were the sacrifices which the people of England thought themselves bound to make in that contest. What was the inference? Why, that in a contest, incalculably more arduous, and involving, in its issue, interests infinitely more

* See Vol. v. p. 996, of the Parliamentary Debates.

important, we should make, at least, equal efforts, and display, at least, equal perseverance? What was at any time the specific danger from the ambition of Louis XIV., that called forth all the energy of this country? First, generally, his unprincipled ambition; latterly, war was carried on against him because there was a danger that France would acquire an influence in the councils of Spain. An influence in the councils of Spain! Would to God such were the only danger that we had now to apprehend! Yet for this, the honourable gentleman thinks war was justly and nobly carried on! And now—Oh! now, there is no reason, no pretext for carrying on war at all; no danger now of French influence in Spain!—France intermeddle in the concerns of Spain now!—France command the treasures, dispose of the fleets, direct the policy of the Spanish monarchy now! Not she; she does not presume to entertain projects so ambitious. Spain indeed! She has nothing to do with Spain; nor with Holland; nor with the Netherlands; nor with Switzerland; nor with Germany; nor with Italy (with Italy, God be thanked! not much;) nor with Egypt. There is nothing now to fear from her power; nothing now to suspect from her intrigues; no danger to the balance of Europe; no hazard to the liberties, the religion, the constitutions of the several states and kingdoms of the world!

If, however, there be no reason for carrying

on the war, it is not, therefore, the less necessary to inquire what possibility there is of making, and what chance for securing, peace. And this is a question which unfortunately cannot be agitated, without touching upon the second topic, which the honourable gentleman prohibited, —the personal character and conduct of the first consul of the French republic. On what ground, indeed, the honourable gentleman thinks himself warranted in precluding such a discussion, it is not easy to conceive. The discussion was not of our seeking. The first consul voluntarily forced himself upon our observation, in a way that made it impossible for us to turn aside, and to pretend not to see him. He told us plainly, that if we had to do with France at all, we must have to do with *him*, as concentering in his own person all that was stable, all that was authoritative, all that was responsible to foreign countries, in the new government of France. "If there be power in France, it is in *me*; if there be faith in France, in *me* must you look for it; if you make peace with France, *my* word, *my* character, *my* personal dispositions must be your sole, and sufficient security." Such was the language of the first consul to His Majesty and his government; and when, in compliance with such an invitation, it is proposed to examine the foundation and validity of the only security thus offered to us, the honourable gen-

tleman steps in, and tells the House, that such an examination is highly indecorous and unnecessary. It might give offence, it seemed, to the first consul; it was personal and indelicate; and I know not what other terms of fine feeling were applied to it. Now, first, as to the fear of giving offence to the first consul himself, or to France: the honourable gentleman appears to have very ill understood to what degree the temper of France was captious and irritable, in respect to the character of its existing, or expired governments; otherwise the honourable gentleman, with that delicacy which he professes to wish to observe, and that fear of offending, which dictates his warning to this side of the House, would not have indulged himself in many parts of the speech which he has made this day. For does the honourble gentleman imagine, that it is to their government of the present hour, or to that which Buonaparte had destroyed to erect this, or to any one of the nine or ten immediately preceding governments, that France limited the privilege and sacredness which made it almost blasphemy to condemn their proceedings? No such thing; the honourable gentleman, himself, in reviling the ambition of the ancient government of France, has as much sinned against the majesty of the French nation, as if he had presumed to traduce Brissot or Robespierre, or any of the latter tyrants who swept them to the scaffold, and were swept

by their successors to the same scaffold in their turn. The honourable gentleman, indeed, commits his country most rashly, by such intemperate language against Louis XIV. Does he not know, or has he forgotten at the moment, that Rome was sacked and pillaged the other day, to avenge the manes of Vercengetorix (or some such name), a king of the Gauls, who flourished some time before Louis XIV., and whom Julius Cæsar was discovered to have aggrieved in a scandalous manner; and that to reclaim the trophies won from the Burgundians, was one of the pretexts alleged for the invasion of Switzerland? Let not, therefore, the honourable gentleman imagine, that the lapse of near a century, since the time of Louis XIV., would bar France, in her own good time, from avenging the wrongs done to his memory. France is not so forgetful, *nullum tempus occurrit.* Her vengeance may sleep, indeed; but opportunity would awaken it, and could we be caught as fairly off our guard, as weak and as inviting as Rome or as Switzerland (which might readily be the case if we would accept the counsel of the honourable gentleman opposite, and make peace, or armistice, without examination or delay), the honourable gentleman's abuse of Louis XIV., would be as good a plea as any other, for declaring war against us, and pursuing it to our ruin.

Forced, however, as we are at all hazards, to

sift pretty narrowly the character and conduct of the present ruler of France, it is some satisfaction that we have before-hand so much of what is the only testimony to be relied on, that of "experience and the evidence of facts," to guide our judgment, and aid our decision upon the subject. I will not follow my right honourable friend through the detail of Buonaparte's conduct with regard to foreign states, in every transaction in which he has been engaged, from his first appearance at the head of the army of Italy, to his late disgraceful flight from the army of Egypt. The facts are before the House; they are fresh in every body's recollection. To these facts what testimony is opposed: first, the declaration of Buonaparte himself, swearing by himself, no doubt, as was the custom and the right of so transcendant a personage; and secondly, his minister, M. Talleyrand. Talleyrand, to be sure, was an admirable witness to character in matter of negociation. Talleyrand certainly had proved, that he knew well how to make a treaty; but he seemed to be quite lost in admiration of Buonaparte's talents for keeping one. This was a thing of which he had no idea. "The old Directory and I," said Talleyrand, "know pretty well how to set about concluding a treaty; there is the American treaty, which all the world knows; the Portugal treaty too; both were managed cleverly enough in the making; but as to the keeping

them that is quite another thing. There, indeed, we have no skill, nor talent: but here, here is a man, who keeps treaties as well as makes them; a perfect phenomenon in the diplomacy of France." Such is the testimony that Talleyrand can furnish on behalf of Buonaparte. For that which Buonaparte can give in favour of himself, it fortunately is not necessary to rest on conjecture or inference. Fortunately the chance of war has thrown into our hands documents, of which the authenticity cannot be questioned; and in which the characters of fraud, perjury, treachery, and deliberate breach of faith, are written in Buonaparte's own hand against himself. I allude to the letters lately intercepted on their passage from Egypt.

And here I must take some notice of the remarks of the honourable gentleman, and of those which I understand have been made in other places on the publication of those letters. It has been argued, that there was something base and illiberal, something contrary to the rights of mitigated war, and to the practice of civilized nations, in publishing letters of an enemy, which the chance of war had thrown into our hands. I will not enter into the theory of this question, because, being a question of practical policy, it can be much better settled by a reference to the conduct of the most civilized countries in their best times. I apprehend the honourable

gentlemen opposite will not dispute the claim of our own country (for it is the conduct of Great Britain that I mean to quote), to the qualification which I have bestowed upon it, and I am confident that they will agree with me as to the character of the particular period of our history, to which I refer; for it is one which they are themselves extremely fond of citing with expressions of high commendation, for reasons sufficiently obvious; it was the year 1759, the period of the glorious war carried on under the administration of the father of my right honourable friend who sits beside me (Mr. Pitt).

The paper which I hold in my hand, contains an extract from the London Gazette, from Tuesday, August 14, to Saturday, August 18, 1759. "Among the papers which were taken at Detmold on the 5th instant, by His Majesty's light troops, an original letter is found from the Marshal Duc de Belleisle, to Marshal Contades, dated Versailles, July 23rd, 1759, in which there is the following passage." Then follows a passage extracted from the letter, with which it is not necessary to trouble the House. In the London Gazette Extraordinary, of Friday, October 12, in the same year, were published some intercepted letters taken in the East Indies, which were still more in point, from the substance of their contents, as well as from the precedent of publication. The first was, "Translation of an Intercepted Letter from M. Lally to M.

Lerpit." Another was, "Translation of a Letter intercepted going from Pondicherry to Masulipatam;" in which there were some passages so curious, when compared with those letters from Egypt, which have lately been published, that I believe the House will forgive me, if I take up a few moments of their time in reading a part of it to them; it was as follows: "Shall I mention to you our unfortunate expedition to Tanjore? Bad news is interesting, but painful to the writer. . . The army has suffered greatly from hunger, thirst, watching and fatigue. . Poor French! What a situation are we in! What projects we thought ourselves capable of executing, and how are we disappointed! . . . . I pity our general. He must be extremely embarrassed, notwithstanding his extensive genius, without money or fleet: his troops very discontented, his reputation declining . . . . What will become of us?" . . . Would not any person who heard this, without being told from whence it came, be persuaded that it was, in fact one of the late interceptions from Egypt; when, at least as much as at Pondicherry in 1759, the army have reason to be "disgusted with their situation?" . . . .

Can there be then, Sir, any longer a doubt as to the strict precedented propriety of availing ourselves of every information of such a sort which came into our power? Or will a stand now be made (it is very possible) that against France, and especially against Buonaparte himself, such an advantage was

ungenerous? Such perhaps may be the argument; for I have heard that in another place it has been gravely declared, that the publisher of Buonaparte's letters must have a worse heart than the writer of them. These are harsh words; but when I look a little farther, and find the same orator arguing, that the scarcity proceeded from the war, I feel that an imputation, however severe, from such an arguer is not much to be regarded. But, in truth, does Buonaparte merit for the goodness of his heart, a special exemption from the fair advantages arising out of the fortune of war? Has he so conducted himself as to deserve such a compliment? Perhaps an extract, which I will take the liberty to read from the Moniteur of the 19th Pluviose, 5th year (some time in January 1797), would settle this point as completely as the London Gazette has settled the other. "Copy of a Letter from General Buonaparte, Commander in Chief of the Army of Italy, to the Executive Directory. Verona, 1 Pluviose, 5th year. Citizens Directors! You will find enclosed some intercepted letters, which are extremely interesting; as you will see in them the obstinate bad faith of the court of Rome." Then follows the publication, at length, of a letter from the cardinal secretary of state at Rome, to M. Albani (the nuncio) at Vienna; and the House will remember that Rome was not then actually at war with the French republic. And

this was the man entitled to peculiar delicacy, against whom the just rights of war ought not to be enforced!

But in defiance of the proofs arising out of Buonaparte's own testimony, thus fortunately produced against himself, and in contradiction to all that has been stated by my right honourable friend, the honourable gentleman thinks it sufficient to maintain that Buonaparte has not in point of fact violated the treaty of Campo Formio. Undoubtedly, the honourable gentleman is right. Buonaparte did not violate the treaty of Campo Formio. But what then? What ground for triumph does the honourable gentleman find in this concession? The honourable gentleman must have mistaken my right honourable friend's meaning, if he supposes that the whole of his argument is to be overthrown by the production of a single instance of a treaty not broken by Buonaparte. If, indeed, my right honourable friend had asserted that France had never broken a treaty without Buonaparte; if the tenor of his argument had been that Buonaparte was a necessary ingredient in every breach of treaty; then, to be sure, to find one which had been broken by France without his agency, might be matter of high controversial triumph. But my right honourable friend asserted no such thing. He merely asserted that Buonaparte had never kept a treaty on his part; and that France on

her's had left none unviolated;—but that she had employed Buonaparte to violate them all; that she had been so poor in resources as to be able to find but one instrument for such complicated and multiplied acts of wickedness, it never entered into my right honourable friend's head to assert.

There remains another consideration personal to the first consul, which it is impossible to leave wholly out of the question; and this is the stability of his government; without which, it is plain that there can be no security for any peace which we may conclude with him at the present moment. Upon this point it cannot be necessary to say much. Every probability, every presumption, is obviously against the permanence of a power, which rests on none of the known and intelligent principles on which a government has ever yet been supported:—a power possessed by republicans, which is built upon the wreck and ruins of every principle of freedom; a power professing to emanate from the people, which no one class or description of the people had either a share in creating, or an interest in preserving; a despotism without the sanction of prescription, or the mitigation of established laws, or usages, or manners; a military despotism proposing to maintain itself by universal peace: these are anomalies, which it becomes those gentlemen to explain and to reconcile to common understandings; to

reconcile, if they can, with past experience, or with any reasonable theory, when they contend for the stability of the new government in France; or is there some high and mysterious principle of preservation, such as the vulgar and uninitiated cannot comprehend, which will watch over the destinies of Buonaparte? Is it, that owing his crown, as Macbeth was described to owe his, to "fate and metaphysical aid;"—it was expected that the "metaphysical aid," of Sieyes, who had helped him to the crown, would be able, under all chances, to keep it safe upon his head? that there was some charm contrived by that "weird" Abbé, which would baffle all combinations that "man of woman born could bring against him?"

But after exhausting all the inducements to immediate peace, the honourable gentleman endeavoured to alarm the House by prophecies of the dangers and disasters to be expected from the prosecution of the war. On this point, as it is matter upon which much less conviction could be attained by argument, I shall not detain the House long. I will only observe, in passing, that when among those dangers the honourable gentleman enumerated so confidently the desertion of our allies, and when he inferred the almost certainty of this desertion from a review of the past conduct of these powers, whom he stigmatized with every opprobrious epithet that his imagination could suggest to him, I cannot help being

surprised, that the honourable gentleman should not have reflected, that such a proceeding suited very ill with the recommendation which he so often inculcated, in the course of his speech, to take no retrospect, and to abstain from invective. I wonder that it did not occur to him, that if there was much danger of irritating the enemy by intemperate language in this House, it was not wholly immaterial to consider whether similar language might not disgust our allies. Perhaps the honourable gentleman, thinking their dereliction of us so sure, one time or other, saw no harm in quickening it; and would have us get rid of them as soon as we could. But this policy seems to me to be a little questionable. If a general commanding an army composed of many different nations, were to be told, that at a certain period, a month hence, perhaps, the several contingents of the different powers would be recalled; if he were told this when in presence of the enemy; and if his informer were to add, that he advised him, therefore, instantly to disband his forces himself, and to make what terms he could for his own safety: the advice, it seems to me, is not such as the general would most prudently follow; he would rather conclude that no time, therefore, was to be lost, no exertion spared, to make the utmost advantage of the combination of his whole force while it yet continued unbroken.

But with respect to the probability of such an

event as the honourable gentleman foretold, and with respect to the dreadful disgraces and calamities which were to follow it, I will not trespass upon the patience of the House (especially considering who are to follow me in the debate) by opposing my calculations and predictions to those of the honourable gentleman. It is sufficient for the vote of this night, if government should be allowed to have acted right under the actual circumstances of the case. It would be, indeed, hazardous to foretel the successes of the campaign. But it is some comfort to reflect that the campaign which has just closed, though at its close not in every respect so triumphant as might have been wished, and for a time expected, was yet, upon the whole, one of the most brilliant that history records; so much has been done in that campaign, that if any body at its outset had ventured to anticipate its progress and conclusion would be such as they have in fact proved to be, he would have been considered as sanguine almost to madness. I, for my part, do not at present see, in the state either of France, or of the Powers at war with her, any thing to warrant the tone of despondency, which the honourable gentleman assumed: and to say the truth, when I recollect the many unfulfilled predictions of evil, which have come from the bench on which the honourable gentleman sits, I am not disposed to be much cast down by it. The last time that the tripod of

prophecy was brought into this House, I remember (it was in the spring of 1797), the House was solemnly warned that there were not "three weeks regular government" remaining to the country. That period was long past; and, God be thanked, the evils of anarchy have not yet fallen upon us. I doubt not that it is owing to our own exertions that we are yet safe; and if we are but true to ourselves, we have yet abundant means to provide for the continuance of our safety.

Mr. Erskine and Mr. Fox, in speeches of great ability, opposed the motion. It was supported by Mr. Pitt, in a speech (perhaps the best ever pronounced by him in parliament) in which he took an extensive review of the measures of government since the commencement of the French Revolution—defended their policy, and maintained that "we should be inexcusable if at that moment we were to relinquish the struggle on any grounds short of complete and entire security against the greatest danger which had ever yet threatened the world;—that from perseverance in our efforts under such circumstances, we had the fairest reason to expect the full attainment of that object; but that, at all events, even if we were disappointed in our more sanguine hopes, we were more likely to gain than to lose by the continuation of the contest;—that every month to which it was continued, even if it should not in its effects lead to the destruction of the jacobin system, must tend so far to weaken

and exhaust it, as to give us, at least, a greater comparative security in any other termination of the war;—that on these grounds, that was not the moment at which it was consistent with our interest or our duty to listen to any proposals of negociation with the present ruler of France; but that we were not, therefore, pledged to any unalterable determination as to our future conduct;—that in this we must be regulated by the course of events—and that it would be the duty of His Majesty's ministers from time to time to adapt their measures to any variation of circumstances; to consider how far the operations of the allies, or the internal disposition of France corresponded with our present expectations; and on a view of the whole, to compare the difficulties or risks which might arise in the prosecution of the contest, with the prospect of ultimate success, or of the degree of advantage to be derived from its farther continuance: and to be governed by the result of these considerations in the opinion and advice which we might offer to our sovereign."

The House divided:—

TELLERS.

Ayes	Lord Hawkesbury,	Mr. Canning.	265
Noes	Mr. Whitbread,	Mr. Sheridan.	64

ON THE SUBSIDIES TO THE EMPEROR OF GERMANY.

JULY 18th, 1800.

THIS day MR. PITT moved, "That a further sum, not exceeding £1,500,000, be granted to His Majesty, to enable His Majesty to fulfil the engagements which His Majesty has entered into with the Emperor of Germany. 2. That a sum, not exceeding £545,494 be granted to His Majesty, to make good such sums as have or will become due in the course of the present year, in consequence of engagements with the Emperor of Russia."

MR. I. H. BROWNE supported the motion. It was opposed by MR. JONES and MR. TIERNEY.

MR. CANNING—Sir, From what I have been able to collect from the speech of the honourable gentleman who has just sat down,* there are three grounds on which the opposition to the vote now proposed is attempted to be maintained—first, that an avowed vigorous prosecution of the war is not the way to arrive at peace—secondly, that the Emperor has not hitherto afforded such a co-operation as justified Ministers for having entered into such engagements as those contained in the treaty upon the table, nor is he in a situation to afford such co-operation henceforward as would

* Mr. Tierney.

justify the House in fulfilling them;—and, thirdly, that the present ministers are not fit men to make peace, and that any effort therefore for that object, while they remained in office, must be of no avail.

With regard to the first of these objections, I shall say but little; because I am firmly persuaded that the House must feel, that even if there were no other purpose for which this vote was desirable but that of enabling ministers to enter into immediate negociation for peace with greater advantage, the declaration of such a purpose in this place would be the surest method of occasioning its failure; and that, in order to treat for peace at any time with a chance of success, ministers must be enabled to treat with the means of war in their hands. As to the second point, the extent and value of the co-operation already afforded by the Emperor, and of that which we may still expect from him, I differ widely from the honourable gentleman. The honourable gentleman argues solely on the issue of the last battle which has taken place in Italy; and he attempts to prove from it, not only that the whole of what the Emperor had hitherto done was nothing worth, and that there was still less to be looked for from him in future: and not only that we ought therefore to refuse fulfilling the engagements contracted with him, but that ministers ought to have foreseen the issue; and that they are therefore highly culpable in having contracted engagements, which,

if they had been possessed of such foresight, they would have known at the time of contracting them, to be wholly useless and extravagant.

Now, in the first place, it is somewhat curious to consider what was the degree of foresight which ministers were arraigned for not having exercised on this occasion. Was it that they have not foreseen the intention of Austria to abandon the alliance in the course of the campaign, or to relax her efforts, to maintain her armies in a state of inactivity, and to prosecute the war in appearance only, not in reality? If this had been the conduct of Austria, I should have understood what was meant by accusing ministers of want of due precaution and prudence; because, of the intentions of an ally, it might be argued, it was their bounden duty to inform themselves accurately before they committed the faith of this country, or hazarded its wealth upon the alliance. If the armies of our ally, when put in motion, had proved weak and inefficient, incapable of making head against the enemy to whom they were opposed: and in numbers, valour, and discipline, miserably below the point at which we had been taught to rate them:—this too might be ground of accusation against ministers, which I could at least understand; for it might be argued, with some appearance of justice, that the real state of the armies of a power with whom we confederated, and whom we were engaging to subsidize, was a

matter which it was the duty of ministers to ascertain beyond doubt, and which they had obvious means of ascertaining. But was any failure of this sort on the part of Austria pretended? Was it argued or believed that Austria had shown any want of heart or of strength? Had her armies forfeited their ancient reputation? Had they fought as if they were either unfit for action in themselves, or restrained by the timid or treacherous policy of their court? Let that very battle, on the issue of which the fate of the war is supposed to have turned; let the battle of Marengo, contested as it was with an obstinate bravery, and with a variety of fortune which have few parallels in history, bear witness that Austria has not been wanting in exertion, and that the arms of Austria have lost nothing of their prowess, or of their glory! But no; it was the issue of this very battle that ministers ought to have foreseen: they ought to have foreseen that on one battle would turn the fate of the whole campaign, and that the issue of that battle would be unfortunate to our ally. If so, they ought to have foreseen, what was not foreseen or conjectured with confidence two hours before the final event of that day, by either those who lost or those who won the battle, by General Melas or General Buonaparte; what up to the very end of the engagement was so doubtful, that if a courier had been dispatched from the plains of Marengo two hours before the

contest actually ceased, he would have announced the victory as inclining decidedly in favour of the Austrians (and then to be sure the admirable foresight of ministers would have been as willingly commended as the want of it is now justly censured); they must have foreseen, not that two armies, of force so unequal, of spirit so ill-matched, as to admit of little struggle for superiority, would meet and decide without difficulty the pretensions of two rival powers; but that the victory, balanced for many hard-fought hours, and at one time almost decided in favour of the Austrians, would by a sudden manœuvre be brought over to the side of the enemy; that at eight o'clock a body of two hundred and fifty French horse would break in upon the triumphant and pursuing Austrians, throw them into confusion, and turn the fate of the day. All this ministers must have foreseen, to be enabled to act upon their foresight; for if their sagacity had failed them an instant before the conclusion of the battle of Marengo, all the rest would have gone only to mislead them. And for not foreseeing all this they are to be condemned as men utterly incapable of conducting the affairs of the country; as having lavished its treasure, and pledged its good faith, and hazarded its safety, on rash and idle speculation! So little can I agree in the justice of these imputatious on this ground, that I am ready to contend, on the contrary, that even

if they had been possessed of this extraordinary and preternatural power which they were so much blamed for wanting; if they could have known that the course of the campaign would lead to a situation in which the hopes and fortunes of the whole would be staked on the issue of one battle between the Austrian army in Italy, and a French army with Buonaparte at its head; if they could have foreseen, not indeed that the battle would be absolutely lost by the Austrians, but that it would be fearfully contested, and that the victory would be to be decided by one of the most anxious and doubtful struggles that ever took place; I should say, that with all this fore-knowledge, ministers would have done wrong not to have pushed things to such a trial; that they would have done well to purchase, at the price of the whole of the subsidy now to be voted, such a chance for the safety of Europe. For, see what was the alternative! If the victory did not remain with Austria, there was, undoubtedly, much to regret, and much to repair; there was difficulty and danger to be struggled with by the Emperor, perhaps now, and great exertions to be made on the part of Great Britain. But, put the other case, and suppose Buonaparte defeated in this one battle; and who was there that doubted that there would have been an end of him and his power. To our ally, the event, such as it has turned out, was failure, and mortification, and embarrass-

ment: to the enemy it would have been utter destruction? and it would, in that case, have brought about the conclusion of the war, in the way which would most effectually have secured the restriction of the power of France, and the independence and tranquillity of the rest of the world. So far, therefore, from thinking ministers blameable for not having foreseen and avoided the hazard of the battle of Marengo, I am ready to contend, that if they could have foreseen and contrived such a trial of the fates and fortunes of the opposing armies with such an alternative before them, the event, even as it now appeared, would have justified them in having done so.

As little can I agree with the honourable gentleman in the opinion, that, whether Austria were worth having or no at the beginning of the campaign, she was not worth having now; and that, after having made these engagements with her, we were at liberty to retract them. It was said, that the sum proposed would be of no efficient use to the Emperor, whose armies were destroyed, his dominions drained of men and money, and his whole power utterly exhausted and broken down. It was suggested, that we had not signed the treaty, and that there was therefore yet time for refusing to fulfil it. It was even hinted, that the Emperor could not honestly ask for the fulfilment of engagements contracted with him under other expectations than those of complete failure and

disappointment: and that when he applied for money under such circumstances, the application deserved to be rejected in terms of indignity and reproach. There appears to me something ungenerous and illiberal in this way of seeing the subject. 'I am not prepared to turn round to an ally the moment that ally becomes unsuccessful, and to address him in the language suggested by the honourable gentleman's observations· "Go: we have nothing now to say to you; your claim upon us is at an end; we made alliance with your strength, and you have brought us failure; we bargained with your hopes, and you have given us disappointment; our engagements were with your good fortune; we abjure all fellowship with your distress!" Such is not the language which I would use, nor the sentiments which I could bring myself to entertain respecting an ally, who, with whatever success, had certainly fought manfully by our side.

Indeed, I cannot but feel some surprise at the manner in which gentlemen seem to think it becoming to treat the Emperor on the present occasion. It is not new, indeed, to find in any men, it is the common feeling of our nature, a blind admiration of success; and I have therefore heard, without much astonishment, the expressions of admiration which have been bestowed in this House upon the chief consul and his victory. But I had hoped that, whatever might be the undis-

tinguishing and incurable insensibility by which vulgar minds are hardened to the perception of real merit, if unaccompanied by success; I had hoped that, with liberal and intelligent minds, though the first impression might be, as it has been, that of astonishment and admiration at the fortune of the victor, the second, and not the less powerful nor less permanent feeling would have been that of compassion and just praise to the courage, the constancy, and the magnanimity of the vanquished. I had thought that, even if we had been unconcerned spectators of the great contest which had been carrying on in Italy; if we had merely read in history of such events as had taken place there, and such a result as they had led to; we should naturally have sympathized with misfortune so bravely struggled against, and so manfully borne. And if such would have been the natural feeling in an indifferent case, I had imagined (but in this I find myself cruelly mistaken), that even the crime of being our ally, even the disqualification of an united interest and a common cause, would not have been sufficient wholly to deprive Austria of a title to our respect and compassion. I had imagined that, after being hurried by the first impulse of their astonishment to mix in the mob that shouted at the heels of Buonaparte, gentlemen would, as soon as they recovered their reflection, have been eager to do justice to the Emperor, by acknowledging the fortitude

with which he bore his reverses, and by doing all that in them lay to enable him to repair them. But no; the Emperor was to look for no such comfort, no such credit here; instead of being soothed and consoled under his misfortunes, he was to be taught with reproaches that he did not yet rate them sufficiently high, that he was not aware of their full extent and malignity; instead of being encouraged to retrieve his losses, and receiving the promise of a cordial assistance, he was bidden to despond and despair, to consider his fortunes as utterly hopeless and irretrievable, and was even taunted as an impostor and a swindler, for proposing to us to assist him in the attempt to retrieve them.

No doubt the honourable gentleman must know the state of the Emperor's affairs much better than he did himself. I cannot help feeling, however, that the Emperor's own word should go for something in this matter. The honourable gentleman puts me in mind of a scene in a French comedy (I believe one of Moliere's), where a man is made to believe that his neighbour is dead; and an attempt not quite so successful, is afterwards made to persuade the reputed dead man himself that he really is so. Presently after, the two neighbours meet in the street, and the supposed corpse not only avers himself to be alive, but actually proposes to borrow money of his friend; the friend is naturally enough in great

indignation at such effrontery—"You borrow money, indeed! a pretty story, truly! lend my money to you! why you know you are dead; you died yesterday; I have it from the best authority! Poor dear Anselm! I am truly sorry for you; but dead you are, sure enough, and you shall get no money of me by pretending to be alive, I promise you." Such was really very nearly the substance of the dialogue which the honourable gentlemen were for holding with Austria. But I, for my part, think the word of the living man a pretty good answer to those who would have believed him dead—and upon nearly the same principles, I am inclined to admit the evidence of Austria in her own behalf, as proof that she is not so utterly undone as the honourable gentlemen would fain have the House to believe, and would, if they could, persuade Austria herself to acknowledge.

The testimony of Austria, however, the honourable gentleman contended to be rather suspicious on this point; because, said he, the Emperor has an interest in deceiving us; he wants to finger our money. This, no doubt, was a sagacious discovery; but surely, in this instance, the sagacity was a little overstrained. The money, as the treaty explained, was to be paid by instalments, the first of which only was now to be made good; and if after receiving the first, the Emperor should fail in the execution of his stipulations, no

further payment would be made. Where, then, was the risk to this country? Or what object could Austria have but that which was fairly put forward? If the first payment was now made, would it not be made for work done? If General Melas had drawn the draft for it in the plains of Marengo, would the honourable gentleman have refused to pay it, on the plea that we had not had any valuable consideration for our money? Or, when he considered the exertions of Austria, from the moment at which this treaty was first proposed, to that in which he now wished us to hesitate about completing it, would he not feel himself compelled to acknowledge that the payment, so far as was now to be demanded, was fairly earned? Besides, the honourable gentleman said in another part of his speech, where it suited his arguments, and said most truly, that the whole of the sum to be furnished by us by way of subsidy was inconsiderable, compared with the general scale of the Emperor's war expenditure. See, therefore, what it is that the honourable gentleman imputes to the Emperor; what extravagant and incredible folly, as well as wickedness, when he represents him as purchasing our subsidy at an expence which must swallow up, not the amount of it only, but the whole of the revenues of his own dominions into the bargain; as exhausting the blood of his subjects, and exposing his very capital to imminent

danger: merely—for what? that he might cheat Great Britain of a sum of money? Is there sense or probability in this policy? Is it possible that any government or any individual would play such a game for such a prize—would hazard their whole fortune, nay, their very existence, in order to have, not the possession, but the disposal of a few hundred thousand pounds, to be swindled from a friend? And even if such were the unaccountable madness of our ally, does not the paying by instalments give us a sufficient power to disappoint so absurd a design the moment that it shews itself?

The remaining objection of the honourable gentleman is one that applies more largely, not to this subsidy only, but to every measure that tends in any degree to strengthen the hands of the present ministers, either for the prosecution of the war, or for the negociation of peace. The honourable gentleman gives it as his decided opinion that the present Ministers have utterly disqualified themselves from conducting the war to an honourable termination, and even for treating for peace with a government, at the head of which is a man whom (as the phrase is) they have abused so grossly; Buonaparte could never be expected to listen with patience to the proposals which such men might offer to him, or to offer them any terms but such as it would be disgraceful and disastrous for this country to accept. As I am

myself no panegyrist of Buonaparte, I am not interested in refuting this calumny upon his character, which his admirers are unaccountably (as I think) so forward in throwing upon it. I am not the person to proclaim Buonaparte as a hero, excelling in every great quality of the mind all those who have gone before him in ancient or modern times; but if I had been such an enthusiast in my admiration of Buonaparte, I should have felt it rather awkward to mix with these praises an imputation of such meanness, such littleness of feeling, of such a poor, creeping, pusillanimous spirit, as is implied by saying, "This great man, with all his magnanimity, has one trifling peculiarity—he cannot bear to be spoken of with disrespect; he never treats with any government who have talked lightly of his character and conduct; it is a rule with him not to do so; rather than conclude a peace with such men he will continue the ravages of war, the distress of his own country, the interruption of the happiness of private families, all of which he has himself told us he naturally wishes to avoid more than any other man alive; but he will continue them for ever rather than negociate with men who have spoken ill of him!" How far this may be the character and feeling of this extraordinary man, those who most admired him are best qualified to tell. For my own part, having taken some share in former debates, in which that which is

called abuse of Buonaparte was necessarily introduced, I am not sorry to have an opportunity of saying a very few words upon this subject, especially as much has lately been said in this place of the unmanliness of the attacks which were made on the character of the first consul at the period when his overtures for negociation were declined by this government, and of the shame which those who had any part in this language are now supposed to take to themselves, and the anxiety which it is apprehended they must feel to retract and disavow all that they then so rashly and illiberally uttered. Now, Sir, as I feel no sort of shame, and entertain not the smallest disposition to retract any thing that was then said, I wish to explain the principles upon which I spoke, and upon which I now maintain whatever I did then say. I do not know whether the honourable gentleman will quite understand me, because I do not know that we set out to argue this matter from the same principle; and if not, there is no hope of our coming to any understanding. My principle, Sir, is simply this: there is but one thing which I never wish to forbear speaking when called upon, and which, having spoken, I can at no time feel ashamed of, nor consent to disavow, retract, or qualify; and that is the truth. If what was said of Buonaparte was untrue, that is an accusation of which I know the meaning, and which, if need be, I am prepared to

argue. But if it was true, I confess I am at a loss to conceive where the shame lies, or where the necessity for contradicting it. If, indeed, the nature and essence of truth were capable of being altered by subsequent events, there might be some call for caution in uttering it, and there might be some room for qualification afterwards. But, if this be not the case, I really do not comprehend what is meant by desiring us, who said what we thought of Buonaparte's past actions at the time when we were called upon to examine them, and who still think precisely what we said of them, to take any shame to ourselves for our language. I at least still think as I then thought; and I do not see what ground the events of the last campaign can furnish for changing my opinion. If, for instance, in Buonaparte's invasion of Egypt there was treachery and fraud;—if in his conduct towards its inhabitants, there was unprovoked cruelty;—if in his assumption of the turban, there was impious hypocrisy;—I called these qualities by their name: I call them so still; and I say that this hypocrisy, this cruelty, and this fraud, have left indelible stains upon his character, which all the laurels of Marengo cannot cover, nor all its blood wash away. I know, Sir, there is a cautious, cowardly, bastard morality, which assumes the garb and tone of wisdom, and which prescribes to you to live with an enemy as if he were one day to become your friend; I distrust

this doctrine for one reason, because I fear the same mind which could pride itself on adopting it, would be capable of entertaining the doctrine which is the converse of it, and would prescribe living with a friend as if he were one day to become an enemy. If this be wisdom, I do not boast it; I can only say, Heaven grant me a host of such enemies, rather than one such friend!

So much, Sir, as to the moral question upon this point. But then, as to the practical result, what is it that gentlemen are afraid of? Do they seriously apprehend, that with such declared opinions of Buonaparte's personal character, ministers can never treat with him? Nothing surely can be more visionary than such an apprehension. If the nation with whom we are at war, thinking (I suppose) for reasons of its own, more favourably of his character, or for whatever other reason, choose to make this man the depositary of the power of the state, and the organ of its intercourse with foreign powers, ministers may lament, they may be surprised at such a choice; but where did gentlemen learn, that between these ministers, and a Government whose character and principles they disapproved, there could be no treaty? Not from the experience of the present war; for in the time of the good old Directory, what floods of abuse were poured upon our ministers from the reading desks of the assemblies! and yet I never heard this urged as an impediment

to treaty, either on the part of France or of this country. Not from the history of former wars; for in the wars against Louis XIV., the addresses carried up from this and the other House of Parliament, nay, the sacred lips which spoke from the throne of this kingdom, breathed stronger invectives against that monarch than are to be found in any of the state papers so much complained of for the harshness of their language towards Buonaparte; and yet I never heard that these just invectives were considered as throwing any obstacle in the way of negociation; or that, when the time of negociation came, the conclusion of peace was in fact retarded by them. But perhaps there may be some distinction to be taken; perhaps the dignity of a lawful sovereign will bear without wincing rougher language than that with which it is decent or delicate to tickle the ears of an usurper.

But neither, Sir, was the attack upon the character of Buonaparte a wanton and unprovoked attack, as the honourable gentleman would represent it. When Buonaparte challenged us to acknowledge and act upon the stability of his government, before it was three days old, we doubted, as well we might, the stability of such a government, and thought all probabilities against it. To clear up our doubts, he referred us to his personal character, as the pledge both for the permanency of his power, and for the use which

he would make of it. What were we to do? to acquiesce, without examination, in what we heartily and in our consciences disbelieved? or to examine the value of the pledge which was offered us, and to give our reasons for not being willing to accept it? We preferred the latter alternative, as in fairness and in common sense we were compelled to do. What ground, then, had we to estimate Buonaparte's personal character, but his past actions? These, therefore, we were obliged to scrutinize; in scrutinizing them we were struck with their deformity; and that deformity we were obliged to expose to the world as a justification of our own conduct. If the event has contradicted the expectations which it was natural to form under the circumstances of the time; if the extraordinary, and certainly unlooked-for, successes of the campaign have given stability to Buonaparte's power (for the present, at least, whatever may and must, in all human probability, be the ultimate fate of a power so acquired, and resting on such foundations); if the battle of Marengo, though it did not overthrow Austria, has subjugated France; undoubtedly this change of circumstances may authorize and warrant a change of policy; and supposing the time to arrive when negociation may be in other respects proper, undoubtedly (speaking my own individual opinion) I should say, that the question of Buonaparte's power would not now stand, as it

before did most necessarily stand, in the way of negociation.

It is indeed not surprising, that some gentlemen should wish to inculcate the apprehension, that an insurmountable obstacle to peace exists in the personal resentment and personal antipathy between Buonaparte and the present ministers of this country; and that the obvious cure for such an incompetency on the part of Ministers here would be to remove them. And I have been told that the proper steps have already been taken in this House to advertise for the succession to them. The usual and approved method on these occasions is, I believe, for a gentleman to contend with all his might for the necessity of a change; and, while he argues that fitter men must be found to replace the present Ministers, to disclaim for himself any pretension or wish to be selected for that purpose. Hereupon, the House is expected to express, by some token of acquiescence, its approbation of the change, and its dissent from the self-disqualification of the proposer. And "upon this hint he speaks;" but this hint, I am told, the House unluckily did not give on the occasion to which I allude. The change was proposed; the expediency of speedy new appointments suggested, the self-disqualification stated; but, all this while, the House did not appear to be at all moved; and so the thing fell flat; and,

for the present, at least, no change of ministers seems to be required.

The one plain question now before the House is, whether or no they will enable those Ministers, while they have the conduct of affairs, to conduct them in such a manner as may make either war vigorous, or peace attainable? Or whether, by the refusal to sanction the engagements which they have entered into with our ally, who has certainly fought the battle manfully during this campaign, and who declares himself still ready to persevere in our alliance, ministers are to be disabled from either continuing the war with effect, or negociating with credit or advantage? It is for this House to consider whether the interests of the country will be best promoted, its character best maintained, and an honourable peace ultimately best secured, by breaking our engagements, by slackening our exertions; by giving proofs of bad faith, cowardice, and pusillanimity; by turning our back upon our ally, and resigning ourselves to a blind and stupid admiration of the prowess and fortunes of our enemy; or by fulfilling our engagements in the same spirit in which they were contracted: by furnishing the means of carrying on the war with vigour, in order that we may meet the hour of negociation with dignity and confidence in ourselves; and by determining that, in whatever event, we will have nothing

to lay to our own charge; that we will secure under all circumstances the consolation that we have not been wanting to ourselves or to others; and that, while we have provided most effectually for our own safety and honour, we have at the same time done all in our power to afford to the other states of Europe the means of maintaining their security and independence?

One word, and only one word more. The honourable gentleman tells us that Great Britain is become, by the folly of her present ministers, the dupe of most of the powers on the Continent, and the laughing stock of them all. I would answer this from another part of the honourable gentleman's speech, in which he also tells us (and it was some comfort to hear it), that such is the envy which the situation of this country has excited throughout Europe, that we are in imminent danger from a confederacy, formed for the express purpose of reducing our exorbitant power and greatness. Now, Sir, how both these things can be true, I am at a loss to conceive. Contempt and envy do not usually exist together with respect to the same object. But if they be both true, and if the effect of the misgovernment of ministers has been only to increase the power and prosperity of the country; if, through their blunders, we have been duped into wealth, and deceived into aggrandizement; if we have been deluded and misled into a degree of greatness and power which

excites the jealousy of our deluders; happy is that country whose misconduct turns out so fortunately for itself; and long may such misconduct, if such be its consequences, continue.—"*Mallem, mehercule, cum istis errare, quam cum aliis rectè sentire!*"

After a few words in opposition to the motion from Mr. NICHOLLS, the resolutions were agreed to.

END OF VOL. I.

SHACKELL AND BAYLIS, JOHNSON'S-COURT.

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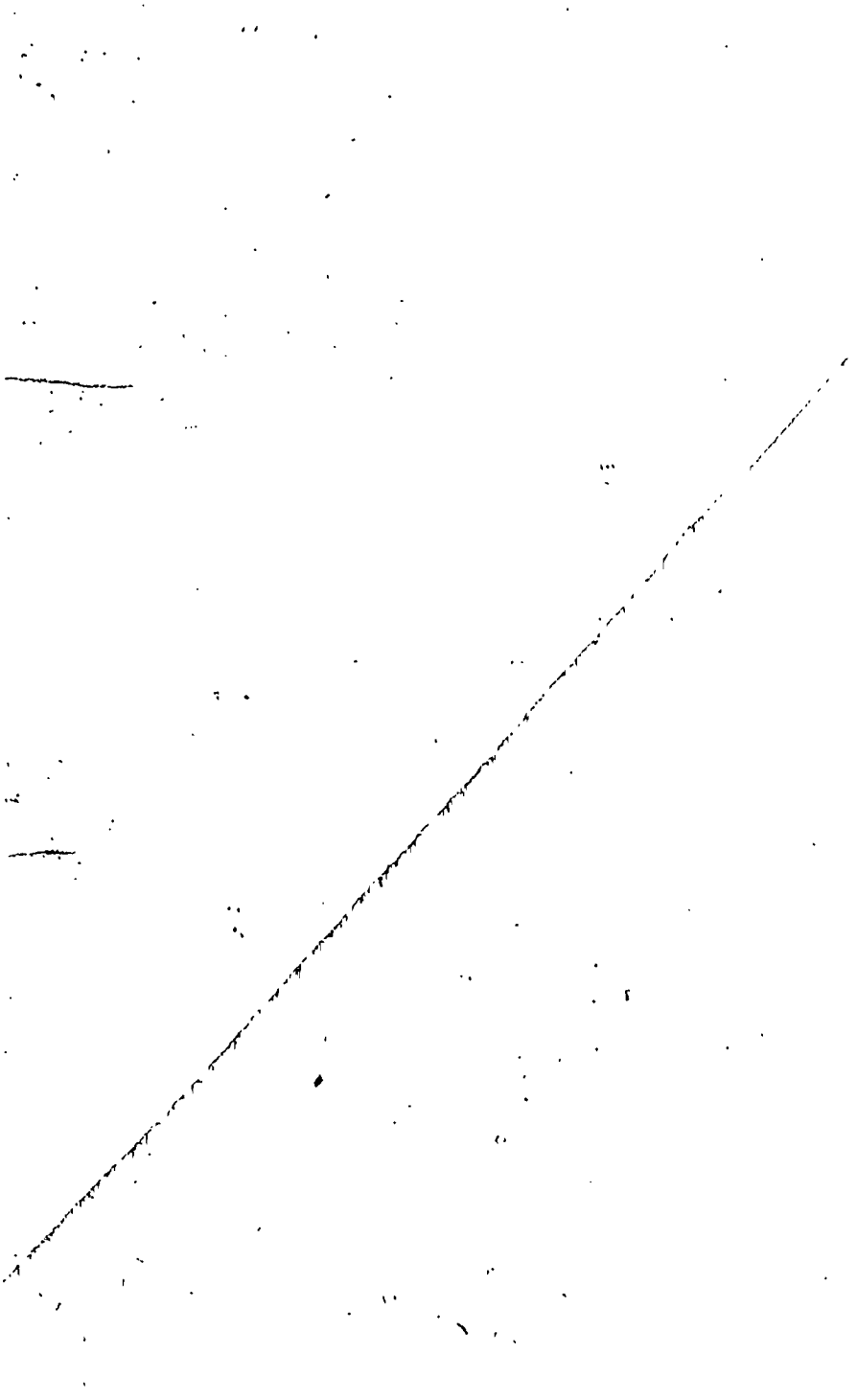

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